CHARLIE CODMAN'S CRUISE

HORATIO ALGER JR.

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CHARLIE CODMAN'S CRUISE

OR

A YOUNG SAILOR'S PLUCK

By

HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

Author of "Adrift in New York," "Hector's Inheritance," "The Erie Train Boy," and over fifty more of the best stories for boys ever written.

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CHARLEY CODMAN'S CRUISE.

CHAPTER I.

CHARLIE AND THE MISER.

Charlie Codman turned out of Washington into Bedford Street just as the clock in the Old South steeple struck two. He was about fourteen, a handsome, well-made boy, with a bright eye and a manly expression. But he was poor. That was evident enough from his clothes, which, though neat and free from dust, were patched in several places. He had a small roll of daily papers under his arm, the remains of his stock in trade, which he had been unable wholly to dispose of.

Some of my readers may know that the Latin School and English High School are kept in the same building. At two o'clock both are dismissed. Charlie had scarcely passed the school-house, when a crowd of boys issued from the school-yard, and he heard his name called from behind. Looking back, he recognized a boy somewhat smaller than himself, with whom he had formed an acquaintance some time before.

"Where are you bound, Charlie?" asked Edwin Banks.

"I'm going home now."

"What luck have you had this morning?"

"Not much. I've got four papers left over, and that will take away about all my profits."

"What a pity you are poor, Charlie. I wish you could come to school with us."

"So do I, Eddie. I'd give a good deal to get an education, but I feel that I ought to help mother."

"Why won't you come some time, and see us, Charlie? Clara and myself would be very glad to see you at any time."

"I should like to go," said Charlie, "but I don't look fit."

"Oh, never mind about your clothes. I like you just as well as if you were dressed in style."

"Perhaps I'll come some time," said Charlie. "I'd invite you to come and see me, but we live in a poor place."

"Just as if I should care for that. I will come whenever I get an invitation.

"Then come next Saturday afternoon. I will be waiting for you as you come out of school."

Charlie little thought where he would be when Saturday came.

Shortly after that the boys separated, and Charlie's attention was arrested by the sight of an old man with a shambling gait, who was bending over and anxiously

searching for something on the sidewalk. Charlie recognized him at once as "old Manson, the miser," for this was the name by which he generally went.

Old Peter Manson was not more than fifty-five, but he looked from fifteen to twenty years older. If his body had been properly cared for, it would have been different; but, one by one, its functions had been blunted and destroyed, and it had become old and out of repair. Peter's face was plowed with wrinkles. His cheeks were thin, and the skin was yellow and hung in folds. His beard appeared to have received little or no attention for a week, at least, and was now stiff and bristling.

The miser's dress was not very well fitted to his form. It was in the fashion of twenty years before. He wore grayish trousers, patched in divers places with dark cloth by an unskilful hand; a vest from which the buttons had long since departed, and which was looped together by pieces of string, but not closely enough to conceal a dirty and tattered shirt beneath; a coat in the last stages of shabbiness; while over all hung a faded blue cloak, which Peter wore in all weathers. In the sultriest days of August he might have been seen trudging along in this old mantle, which did him the good service of hiding a multitude of holes and patches, while in January he went no warmer clad. There were some who wondered how he could stand the bitter cold of winter with no more adequate covering, but if Peter's body was as tough as his conscience, there was no fear of his suffering.

Charlie paused a moment to see what it was that the old man was hunting for.

"Have you lost anything?" he asked.

"Yes," said Peter, in quavering accents. "See if you can find it, that's a good boy. Your eyes are better than mine."

"What is it?"

"It is some money, and I—I'm so poor, I can't afford to lose it."

"How much was it?"

"It wasn't much, but I'm so poor I need it."

Charlie espied a cent, lying partially concealed by mud, just beside the curb-stone. He picked it up.

"This isn't what you lost, is it?"

"Yes," said Peter, seizing it eagerly. "You're a good boy to find it. A good boy!"

"Well," thought Charlie, wondering, as the old man hobbled off with his recovered treasure, "I'd rather be poor than care so much for money as that. People say old Peter's worth his thousands. I wonder whether it is so."

Charlie little dreamed how much old Peter was likely to influence his destiny, and how, at his instigation, before a week had passed over his head, he would find himself in a very disagreeable situation.

With his eyes fixed on the ground Peter shuffled along, making more rapid progress than could have been expected. Occasionally he would stoop down and pick up any little stray object which arrested his attention, even

to a crooked pin, which he thrust into his cloak, muttering as he did so:

"Save my buying any. I haven't had to buy any pins for more'n ten years, and I don't mean to buy any more while I live. Ha! ha! Folks are *so* extravagant! They buy things they don't need, or that they might pick up, if they'd only take the trouble to keep their eyes open. 'Tisn't so with old Peter. He's too cunning for that. There goes a young fellow dressed up in the fashion. What he's got on must have cost nigh on to a hundred dollars.

"What dreadful extravagance! Ha! ha! It hasn't cost old Peter twenty dollars for the last ten years. If he had spent money as some do, he might have been in the poor-house by this time. Ugh! ugh! it costs a dreadful sum to live. If we could only come into the world with natural clothes, like cats, what a deal better it would be. But it costs the most for food. Oh, dear! what a dreadful appetite I've got, and I *must* eat. All the money spent for victuals seems thrown away. I've a good mind, sometimes, to go to the poor-house, where it wouldn't cost me anything. What a blessing it would be to eat, if you could only get food for nothing."

It is very clear that Peter would have been far better off, as far as the comforts of life are concerned, in the city almshouse; but there were some little obstacles in the way of his entering. For instance, it would scarcely have been allowed a public pensioner to go round quarterly to

collect his rents—a thing which Peter would hardly have relinquished.

Reflections upon the cost of living brought to Peter's recollection that he had nothing home for supper. He accordingly stepped into a baker's shop close at hand.

"Have you got any bread cheap?" he inquired of the baker.

"We intend to sell at moderate prices."

"What do you ask for those loaves?" said the old man, looking wistfully at some fresh loaves piled upon the counter, which had been but a short time out of the oven.

"Five cents a piece," said the baker. "I'll warrant you will find them good. They are made of the best of flour."

"Isn't five cents rather dear?" queried Peter, his natural appetite struggling with his avarice.

"Dear!" retorted the baker, opening his eyes in astonishment; "why, my good sir, at what price do you expect to buy bread?"

"I've no doubt they're very good," said Peter hastily; "but have you any stale loaves? I guess they'll be better for me."

"Yes," said the baker, "I believe I have, but they're not as good as the fresh bread."

"How do you sell your stale loaves?" inquired Peter, fumbling in his pocket for some change.

"I sell them for about half-price—three cents a piece."

"You may give me one, then; I guess it'll be better for me."

Even Peter was a little ashamed to acknowledge that it was the price alone which influenced his choice.

The baker observed that, notwithstanding his decision, he continued to look wistfully toward the fresh bread. Never having seen old Peter before, he was unacquainted with his character, and, judging from his dilapidated appearance that he might be prevented, by actual poverty, from buying the fresh bread, exclaimed with a sudden impulse: "You seem to be poor. If you only want one loaf I will for this once give you a fresh loaf for three cents—the same price I ask for the stale bread."

"Will you?"

Old Peter's eyes sparkled with eagerness as he said this.

"Poor man!" thought the baker, with mistaken compassion; "he must indeed be needy, to be so pleased."

"Yes," he continued, "you shall have a loaf this once for three cents. Shall I put it in a paper for you?"

Peter nodded.

Meanwhile he was busy fumbling in his pockets for the coins requisite to purchase the loaf. He drew out three battered cents, and deposited them with reluctant hand on the counter. He gazed on them wistfully while the baker carelessly swept them with his hand into the till behind the counter; and then, with a sigh of resignation at parting with the coins, seized the loaf and shambled out into the street.

He put the bundle under his arm, and hastened up the

street, his mouth watering in anticipation of the feast which awaited him.

The baker was congratulating himself upon having done a charitable action, when Peter came back in haste, pale with fright.

"I—I——" he stammered, "must have dropped some money. You haven't picked up any, have you?"

"Not I!" said the baker carelessly. "If you dropped it here you will find it somewhere on the floor. Stay, I will assist you."

Peter seemed rather disconcerted than otherwise by this offer of assistance, but could not reasonably interpose any objection.

After a very brief search Peter and the baker simultaneously discovered the missing coin. The former pounced upon it, but not before the latter had recognized it as a gold piece.

"Ho, ho!" thought he, in surprise, "my charity is not so well bestowed as I thought. Do you have many such coins?" he asked meaningly.

"I?" said Peter hastily. "Oh, no! I am very poor. This is all I have, and I expect it will be gone soon—it costs so much to live!"

"It'll never cost you much," thought the baker, watching the shabby figure of the miser as he receded from the shop.

CHAPTER II.

A MISER'S HOUSEHOLD.

Peter Manson owned a small house in an obscure street. It was a weather-beaten tenement of wood, containing some six or eight rooms, all of which, with one exception, were given over to dirt, cobwebs, gloom, and desolation. Peter might readily have let the rooms which he did not require for his own use, but so profound was his distrust of human nature that not even the prospect of receiving rent for the empty rooms could overcome his apprehension of being robbed by neighbors under the same roof. For Peter trusted not his money to banks or railroads, but wanted to have it directly under his own eye or within his reach. As for investing his gold in the luxuries of life, or even in what were generally considered as absolute necessaries, Peter was no such fool as that. A gold eagle was worth ten times more to him than its equivalent in food or clothing.

With more than his usual alacrity, old Peter Manson, bearing under his cloak the fresh loaf which he had just procured from the baker on such advantageous terms, hastened to his not very inviting home.

Drawing from his pocket a large and rusty door-key, he

applied it to the door. It turned in the lock with a creaking sound, and the door yielding to Peter's push, he entered.

The room which he appropriated to his own use was in the second story. It was a large room, of some eighteen feet square, and, as it is hardly necessary to say, was not set off by expensive furniture. The articles which came under this denomination were briefly these: a cherry table which was minus one leg, whose place had been supplied by a broom-handle fitted in its place; three hard wooden chairs of unknown antiquity; an old wash-stand; a rusty stove which Peter had picked up cheap at an auction, after finding that a stove burned out less fuel than a fireplace; a few articles of crockery of different patterns, some cracked and broken; a few tin dishes, such as Peter found essential in his cooking; and a low bedstead with a scanty supply of bedclothes.

Into this desolate home Peter entered.

There was an ember or two left in the stove, which the old man contrived, by hard blowing, to kindle into life. On these he placed a few sticks, part of which he had picked up in the street early in the morning, and soon there was a little show of fire, over which the miser spread his hands greedily as if to monopolize what little heat might proceed therefrom. He looked wistfully at the pile of wood remaining, but prudence withheld him from putting on any more.

"Everything costs money," he muttered to himself. "Three times a day I have to eat, and that costs a sight.

Why couldn't we get along with eating once a day? That would save two-thirds. Then there's fire. That costs money, too. Why isn't it always summer? Then we shouldn't need any except to cook by. It seems a sin to throw away good, bright, precious gold on what's going to be burnt up and float away in smoke. One might almost as well throw it into the river at once. Ugh! only to think of what it would cost if I couldn't pick up some sticks in the street. There was a little girl picking up some this morning when I was out. If it hadn't been for her, I should have got more. What business had she to come there, I should like to know?

"Ugh, ugh!"

The blaze was dying out, and Peter was obliged, against his will, to put on a fresh supply of fuel.

By this time the miser's appetite began to assert itself, and, rising from his crouching position over the fire, he walked to the table on which he had deposited his loaf of bread. With an old jack-knife he carefully cut the loaf in two equal parts. One of these he put back into the closet. From the same place he also brought out a sausage, and, placing it over the fire, contrived to cook it after a fashion. Taking it off he placed it on a plate, and seated himself on a chair by the table.

It was long since the old man, accustomed to stale bread—because he found it cheaper—had tasted anything so delicious.

"It is very good," he muttered, with a sigh of satisfac-

tion. "I don't fare so well every day. If it hadn't been for that unlucky piece of gold, perhaps the baker would have let me had another loaf at the same price."

He soon despatched the half-loaf which he allotted to his evening meal.

"I think I could eat the other half," he said, with unsatisfied hunger; "but I must save that for breakfast. It is hurtful to eat too much. Besides, here is my sausage."

The sausage was rather burned than cooked, but Peter was neither nice nor fastidious. He did not eat the whole of the sausage, however, but reserved one-half of this, too, for breakfast, though it proved so acceptable to his palate that he came near yielding to the temptation of eating the whole. But prudence, or rather avarice, prevailed, and, shaking his head with renewed determination, he carried it to the closet and placed it on the shelf.

Between seven and eight o'clock Peter prepared to go to bed, partly because this would enable him to dispense with a fire, the cost of which he considered so ruinous. He had but just commenced his preparations for bed when a loud knock was heard at the street door.

At the first sound of the knocking Peter Manson started in affright. Such a thing had not occurred in his experience for years.

"It's some drunken fellow," thought Peter. "He's mistaken the house. I'll blow out the candle, and then he'll think there's nobody here."

He listened again, in hopes to hear the receding steps

of the visitor, but in vain. After a brief interval there came another knock, louder and more imperative than the first.

Peter began to feel a little uneasy.

"Why don't he go?" he muttered peevishly. "He can't have anything to do with me. Nobody ever comes here. He's mistaken the house."

His reflections were here interrupted by a volley of knocks, each apparently louder than the last.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" exclaimed the miser, with a ludicrous mixture of terror and perplexity. "It's some desperate ruffian, I know it is. I wish the police would come. I shall be robbed and murdered."

Peter went to the window and put his head out, hoping to discover something of his troublesome visitor. The noise of opening the window attracted his attention.

"Hello!" he shouted. "I thought I'd make you hear some time or other. I began to think you were as deaf as a post, or else had kicked the bucket."

"Who's there?" asked Peter, in a quavering voice.

"Who's there! Come down and see, and don't leave a fellow to hammer away all night at your old rat-trap. Come down and open the door."

"This ain't the house," said Peter. "You've made a mistake. Nobody ever comes here."

"No more I should think they would, if you always keep 'em waiting as long as you have me. Come along down and let me in."

"But I tell you," persisted Peter, who didn't at all like the visitor's manners, "that you've made a mistake. This ain't the house."

"Ain't what house, I'd like to know?"

"It ain't the house you think it is," said the old man, a little puzzled by this question.

"And what house do I think it is? Tell me that, you old——"

Probably the sentence would have been finished in a manner uncomplimentary to Peter, but perhaps, from motives of policy, the stranger suppressed what he had intended to say.

"I don't know," returned Peter, at a loss for a reply, "but there's a mistake somewhere. Nobody comes to see me."

"I shouldn't think they would," muttered the outsider, "but every rule has its exceptions, and somebody's come to see you now."

"You've mistaken the person."

"No, I haven't. Little chance of making a mistake. You're old Peter Manson."

"He *has* come to see me," thought Peter uneasily; "but it can't be for any good end. I won't let him in; no, I won't let him in."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" asked his would-be visitor impatiently.

"It's too late to see you to-night."

"Fiddlestick!" retorted the other. "It isn't eight yet."

"I'm just going to bed," added Peter, becoming momentarily more uneasy at the man's obstinacy.

"Going to bed at half-past seven! Come, now, that's all a joke. You don't take me for a fool!"

"But I am," urged Peter; "I always do. I'm very poor, and can't afford to keep a fire and light going all the evening."

"You poor! Well, maybe you are. But that ain't neither here nor there. I have got some important business to see you about, and you must let me in."

"Come to-morrow."

"It's no use; I must see you to-night. So just come down and let me in, or it'll be the worse for you."

"What a dreadful ruffian!" groaned Peter. "I wish a policeman would come along, but he never does when he's wanted. Go away, good man," he said, in a wheedling tone. "Go away, and come again to-morrow."

"I tell you I won't go away. I must see you to-night."

Convinced that the man was not to be denied, Peter, groaning with fear, went down, and, reluctantly drawing the bolt, admitted the visitor.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNWELCOME VISITOR.

Opening the door with trembling hand, Peter Manson saw before him a stout man of forty-five, with a complexion bronzed by exposure to the elements.

Short and thick-set, with a half-defiant expression, as if, to use a common phrase, he "feared neither man nor devil," a glance at him served hardly to reassure the apprehensive old man.

The stranger was attired in a suit of coarse clothing, and appeared to possess little education or refinement. He might be a sailor—there was an indefinable something about him, a certain air of the sea, that justified the suspicion that he had passed some part of his life, at least, in the realms of Father Neptune.

Peter Manson, holding in his hand the fragment of candle which flickered wildly from the sudden gust of wind which rushed in at the door just opened, stood in silent apprehension, gazing uneasily at his unwelcome visitor.

"Well, shipmate," said the latter impatiently, "how long are you going to stand staring at me? It makes me feel bashful, not to speak of its not being over and above civil."

"What do you want?" inquired Peter, his alarm a little

increased by this speech, making, at the same time, a motion as if to close the door.

"First and foremost, I should like to be invited in somewhere, where it isn't quite so public as at the street door. My business is of a private nature."

"I don't know you," said the miser uneasily.

"Well, what's the odds if I know you?" was the careless reply. "Come, push ahead. Where do you live? Upstairs, or down-stairs? I want to have a little private talk with you somewhere."

The speaker was about to cross the threshold, when Peter stepped in front, as if to intercept him, and said hurriedly: "Don't come in to-night; to-morrow will do just as well."

"By your leave," said the visitor coolly, pushing his way in in spite of the old man's feeble opposition. "I have already told you that I wanted to see you to-night. Didn't you hear me?"

"Thieves!" the old man half-ejaculated, but was checked by the other somewhat sternly.

"No, old man, I am not a thief; but if you don't have done with your stupid charges, I may be tempted to verify your good opinion by trying my hand at a little robbery. Now, lead the way to your den, wherever it is, if you know what is best for yourself."

The outer door was already closed, and Peter felt that he was at his intruder's mercy. Nevertheless, there was something in this last speech, rough and imperative as it was,

that gave him a little feeling of security, so far as he had been led to suspect any designs on his property on the part of his companion.

Without venturing upon any further remonstrance, which, it was clear, would prove altogether useless, he shuffled up-stairs, in obedience to the stranger's command, yet not without casting back over his shoulder a look of apprehension, as if he feared an attack from behind.

His visitor, perceiving this, smiled, as if amused at old Peter's evident alarm.

Arrived at the head of the stairs, Peter opened the door into the apartment appropriated to his own use.

The stranger followed him in, and, after a leisurely glance about the room, seated himself with some caution in a chair, which did not look very secure.

Peter placed the flickering candle upon the mantel-piece and seated himself.

It was long, very long, since a visitor had wakened the echoes of the old house; very long since any human being, save Peter himself, had been seated in that room. The old man could not help feeling it to be a strange thing, so unaccustomed was he to the sight of any other human face there.

"It seems to me," said his visitor dryly, taking in at a glance all the appointments of the room, "that you don't care much about the luxuries of life."

"I," said Peter, "I'm obliged to live very plain—very plain, indeed—because I am so poor."

"Poor or not," said the visitor, "you must afford to have a better fire while I am here. I don't approve of freezing."

He rose without ceremony, and taking half a dozen sticks from the hearth, deposited them in the stove, which now contained only some burning embers.

"Stay," said Peter hastily. "Don't put so much on; it's wasteful, and I sha'n't have any left for to-morrow."

"I'll risk that," said the other carelessly. "At any rate, it's better to be comfortable one day than to shiver through two."

The flame caught the wood, which soon blazed up, diffusing an unusually cheerful glow over the apartment. Peter, in spite of the dismay with which he had at first contemplated the sudden movement on the part of his visitor, and the awful consumption of wood which he knew must ensue, nevertheless appeared to enjoy the increased heat. He drew his chair nearer the stove, and an expression of satisfaction was visible in his face as he spread out both hands to catch a little warmth.

"There, Peter," said the stranger, "I knew you'd like it after it was fairly done. Isn't it worth while to have a good warm fire?"

"If it didn't cost so much," groaned Peter, the one thought intruding.

"Hush, Peter; if what people say be true, and as I am inclined to believe, there's no one better able to afford a good fire than you."

"No one better able!" repeated Peter, at once taking

alarm, and lifting up both hands in earnest deprecation, "when I can hardly get enough together to keep from absolute starvation. Oh, it's a strange world, it's a strange world!"

"Well, Peter, some strange people do live in it, to be sure. But people do say, Peter, that you have a power of money hidden away in this old house somewhere."

Peter started to his feet in affright, then feeling that his movement might lead to suspicion, sank back into his seat, saying uneasily: "I only wish it were true. People say such strange things. But it's only idle talk, idle talk. They know better."

"You'd be very grateful, I have no doubt, to anybody that would show you where all these treasures are that people talk about, wouldn't you, hey?"

"Ye—yes," answered Peter Manson, who did not know quite how to understand his companion, whose tone seemed to have a hidden meaning which made him uneasy.

"And will you give me leave to search the house, if I will promise to give you half the gold I find?"

"But you wouldn't find any," answered the miser hastily.

"Then there would be no harm done. Suppose, now, I should remove the flooring just here, for instance, don't you think I might possibly find something underneath that would repay me for my search?"

Unconsciously, the speaker had hit upon one of Peter's places of deposit. Directly under where he was seated there was a box of coins. Accordingly, this remark, which

seemed to indicate to Peter some knowledge of his hiding-place, filled him with fearful apprehensions.

"No, no," said he vehemently; "go away, there isn't any there. If that is all you have got to say, go away and leave me to my rest. I ought to be in bed; it is getting late."

"I *have* something more to say, Peter Manson," returned his companion. "If I had not, I should not have sought you to-night. What I have to say is of great importance to you, as you will find. Will you hear it?"

"Go on," muttered Peter, his attention arrested, in spite of his fears by the stranger's peculiar tone.

"First, then, let me tell you a story. It may be real; it may be only fancy. I won't say anything about that. By the way, Peter, were you ever in the West Indies?"

This question produced a singular effect upon Peter, considering its apparently unimportant character. He started, turned as pale as his ghastly complexion permitted, fixed an anxious glance upon the stranger, who looked as if nothing particular had happened.

"No, I was never there. What made you ask?" responded the miser.

"Nothing particular," said the other carelessly; "if you were never there, no matter. Only it is there that what I am going to tell you happened. But to my story:

"Some twenty years ago there lived in the city of Havana an American gentleman, no matter about his name, who had established himself in business in the city. He had

married before he went there, and had a daughter about sixteen years of age. Well, his business flourished. Good luck seemed to attend him in all his ventures, and he seemed likely to accumulate enough to retire upon before many years."

Peter started, and as the story progressed seemed to be internally agitated. A keen glance satisfied his visitor of this; without appearing to notice it, however, he went on:

"But things don't always turn out as well as we expect. Just when things looked brightest there came a sudden blow, for which the merchant was unprepared. On going to his counting-room one morning, he discovered that his bookkeeper had disappeared, and, what was worse, had carried off with him the sum of twenty thousand dollars—a large sum, was it not?"

"What is all this to me?" demanded Peter, with sudden fierceness.

"I will tell you by and by," said the stranger coolly. "And I will take the liberty to put a little more wood into the stove, and then go on with my story."

"I—I'll put some in," said Peter.

He took a small stick about half as large round as his wrist, and, opening the stove-door, put it in.

"That'll do to begin with," said the stranger, following it, to Peter's dismay, with half a dozen larger ones. "Now we'll be comfortable."

CHAPTER IV.

A STARTLING QUESTION.

While Peter's uneasiness became every moment more marked, his visitor continued:

"This sad defalcation was the more unfortunate because on that very day notes to a heavy amount became due. Of course, the merchant was unable to pay them. Do you know what was the result?"

"How should I know?" asked Peter testily, avoiding the gaze of the stranger, and fixing his eyes uneasily upon the fire.

"Of course, you couldn't know. I was foolish to think such a thing."

"Then what made you think it?" said Peter, in a petulant tone. "I don't care to hear your story. What has it got to do with me?"

"Don't be in too much of a hurry, and perhaps you will learn quite as soon as you care to. The same result followed, which always does follow when a business man cannot meet his engagements. He failed."

Peter stirred uneasily, but said nothing.

"His character for integrity was such that there were many who would have lent him a helping hand, and car-

ried him safely through his troubles; but he was overwhelmed by the blow, and sank under it. Refusing all offers of assistance, he took to his bed, and some six months after died."

"And what became of his daughter?" asked Peter, showing a little curiosity for the first time.

"Ha! you seem to be getting interested," exclaimed the other, fixing his keen eyes upon Peter, who seemed confused. "His daughter was beautiful, and had already won the heart of a young American, who had little money but a handsome figure and good business habits."

"Did she marry this young Codman?"

"Who told you his name was Codman?" asked Peter's visitor, watching him keenly.

"I—I thought you did," stammered the miser, disconcerted.

"You are mistaken. I have mentioned no name."

"Then I—I must have misunderstood you."

"I dare say," said the other ironically. "However, we won't dispute that point. Well, this young Codman—for, singularly enough, you hit upon the right name, not knowing anything of the circumstances, of course—this young Codman married Isabel."

"Isabel!" repeated the old man. "Her name was——"

Here he paused in sudden confusion, feeling that he was betraying himself by his incautious correction.

"Yes, Peter," said the other, with a shrewd smile, "you are right. Her name was not Isabel, but Eleanor. I

acknowledge that I was wrong; but it seems to me that, for one who is entirely a stranger to the events I have been describing, you show a wonderful shrewdness in detecting my mistakes."

Peter maintained a confused silence, and wriggled about uneasily, as if the stranger's fixed and watchful gaze disturbed him.

"Humph! Well, they say that some people have the gift of second sight, and others can see through millstones, and various other wonderful things."

"What has all this to do with me?" asked Peter crossly, for he felt it necessary to make some demonstration. "It's getting late, and I want to go to bed. Go away, and—and come again to-morrow, if you want to."

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, Peter, which means that I am sure of you now, and perhaps you wouldn't let me in if I should call to-morrow. If you are sleepy, I have no objection to your going to bed. I can talk to you as well as if you were sitting up. I will stay here and keep the fire going."

Peter looked at the small pile of wood with a groan, and muttered something about "its being awful extravagant to keep such a fire."

"I believe," said the stranger, "I have not yet told you the name of the defaulting clerk."

Peter said nothing.

"It was Thornton, but his first name was Peter, the same as yours. Singular, isn't it, Peter?"

"I suppose there are a good many Peters in the world," muttered the old man.

"Very likely; though I hope most of them are better than this Peter Thornton. He got off without being taken, with the twenty thousand dollars in his possession. He was fond of money, and many thought this explained the defalcation. However, there were no wanting others who assigned a different motive. It was said that he had been smitten by the youthful charms of his employer's daughter Eleanor, who did not favor his suit."

Peter shifted uneasily in his chair.

"No one could blame her. In fact, it was perfectly preposterous for him to think of mating with her. Did you speak?"

"No!" snarled Peter.

"I thought you said something. I repeat that she had plenty of reasons for rejecting him. She was just sixteen, and beautiful as she was young, and had no lack of admirers ready to devote themselves to her. As for Peter Thornton, ha, ha! he never could have been very handsome, from all I have heard of him. In the first place, he was forty, or more."

"Thirty-eight," muttered Peter, below his breath.

"And his features were irregular, besides being marked with the smallpox, which he had had in early life. He had a long, hooked nose, like a bird's beak, an enormous mouth, little sharp gray eyes like a ferret's, and his hair was

already mingled with gray. On the whole, he hadn't much beauty to boast of. Did you say anything?"

"No!" snarled Peter sourly. He was sitting with his elbows on his knees and his face resting on his hands.

"Beg pardon, I thought you spoke. To add to Peter's charms of person, his disposition was not the sweetest that ever was. He had a harsh and crabbed manner, which would have led to his discharge if he had not had one saving trait. I will say, to his credit, that he was a capital bookkeeper. Of his honesty his employer thought he was well assured, and probably, if nothing had occurred of a character to wound Peter's pride, he might have continued faithful to his trust. One day, however, Peter took an opportunity, when he had been calling at the house of his employer on business connected with the counting-room, to declare his love to the young lady, whom he found alone in the drawing-room.

"You can imagine how much she was amused—why don't you laugh, Peter? You look as glum as if it were *you* that had met this disappointment. The young lady told him plainly, as soon as she got over her astonishment, that she could give him no encouragement whatever. Perhaps there might have been in her tone something of the aversion which it was natural for her to feel at such a proposition from one so much beneath her. If they had married, it would have been a second case of Beauty and the Beast. Beg pardon, Peter, I believe you said something."

"No!" snarled Peter fiercely. "Have you got nearly through? Your story is nothing to me—nothing, I say. I want to go to bed. You have kept me up too late already."

"I can't help that, Peter. It took me too long to get in for me to resign readily the pleasure of your society. I say, Peter, what a jolly good fellow you are—quite a lively companion—only it strikes me you might be a little more civil to your company. It isn't exactly polite to keep telling one how anxious you are for him to go.

"As I was saying when you interrupted me, Eleanor told Peter very decidedly that she could not for an instant entertain his suit. He endeavored to change her determination, being an ardent, impulsive lover, and probably in her impatience she said something which irritated her lover, who went off in a rage. After a while, however, he was foolish enough to open the subject again. Of course, she was extremely annoyed at his persistence, and seeing no other way of escaping the persecution, she felt it necessary to acquaint her father with what had transpired.

"The merchant was naturally indignant at his bookkeeper's presumption, and calling him aside one morning, threatened to discharge him from his employment unless he should forthwith desist. This was, of course, a great blow to Peter's pride. He had the good sense to say nothing, however, but none the less determined within himself to be revenged upon those who had scorned his advances, as soon as an opportuity offered. I don't know as I blame

him. Perhaps I should have done the same under similar circumstances."

There was a trace of agitation upon the pale and wrinkled countenance of the miser.

"This it was," continued the stranger, "taken in connection with Peter's natural cupidity, that led to the defalcation I have mentioned. So far as the merchant was concerned, his revenge was completely successful, for he was the means of his ruin and premature death. And now, Peter," he added, suddenly changing his tone, "can you tell me what induced you to change your name from Thornton to Manson?"

"Me!" exclaimed the miser, starting to his feet in consternation, and glaring wildly at the speaker.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPACT WITH RANDALL.

"Yes," said the stranger composedly; "I repeat the question, why did you change your name to Manson?"

"What—do—you—mean?" the old man faltered slowly.

"I mean just what I say, and I see you understand me well enough."

"You can't prove it," said Peter, with an uneasy glance at his imperturbable companion.

"Can't I? Perhaps not. I should say the mysterious knowledge you seem to possess of the main incidents in my story would prove something."

"That isn't evidence in a court of law," said Peter, regaining a degree of confidence.

"Perhaps not; but I say, Peter, don't you recognize me?"

The old man scanned his features eagerly, and a sudden look of remembrance satisfied the latter that he was not forgotten.

"I see you do remember me," he said. "I thought you hadn't forgotten John Randall. At any rate, he hasn't forgotten you, though twenty years have passed, and I was then but a young man. I used to see you too often about the streets of Havana not to remember that hooked nose,

those gray eyes, and—excuse my plainness of speech—that large mouth. Yes, Peter, your features are impressed upon my memory too indelibly to be effaced."

Peter Manson remembered his companion as one who had had the reputation of being a "wild" young man. He had been placed at school by his father without any profitable result. On his father's death he squandered, in dissipation, the property which came to him, and had since devoted himself to the sea.

"Having settled this little matter of your identity," continued Randall, "I am ready to finish my story. I told you that Eleanor married the young man whose name you remembered so well. He was poor, dependent upon his salary as a clerk, and, thanks to you, his wife had nothing to hope from her father. They were obliged to live in a very humble way. At length, thinking he could do better, he removed to Boston, where his early life had been spent."

"To Boston!" muttered Peter.

"The removal took place some six years since. They had three children when they first came here, but two died, leaving only the second, a boy, named Charlie. I should think he might be fourteen years of age. And now, would you like to know if the husband is still living?"

"Is he?" asked Peter, looking up.

"No. He died about a year since, of a fever."

"And—and Eleanor? What of her?"

"For six months past she has been a tenant of yours."

"A tenant of mine!" exclaimed the miser.

"It is even so. She occupies a second-story room in the tenement-house in —— Street."

"And I have met her face to face?"

"I dare say you have. Your tenants are pretty sure to have that pleasure once a month. But doesn't it seem strange that Eleanor Gray, the beautiful daughter of your Havana employer, should after these twenty years turn up in Boston, the tenant of her father's bookkeeper?"

"Ha, ha!" chuckled the miser, hoarsely. "She isn't so much better off than if she had married old Peter."

"As to being better off," said Randall, "I presume she is better off, though she can't call a hundred dollars her own, than if she were installed mistress of your establishment. Faugh! Poorly as she is obliged to live, it is luxury compared with your establishment."

He glanced about him with a look of disgust.

"If you don't like it," said Peter querulously, "there is no use of your staying. It is past my bed-time."

"I shall leave you in a few minutes, Peter, but I want to give you something to think of first. Don't you see that your property is in danger of slipping from your hands?"

"My property in danger!" exclaimed Peter wildly; "what do you mean? Where is the danger?" Then, his voice sinking to its usual whine: "Not that I have any of any consequence; I am poor—very poor."

"Only from what I see I could easily believe it, but I happen to know better."

"Indeed, I am——"

"No more twaddle about poverty," said Randall decidedly, "it won't go down. I am not so easily deceived as you may imagine. I know perfectly well that you are worth, at the very least, thirty thousand dollars."

"Thirty thousand dollars!" exclaimed the miser, raising both hands in astonishment.

"Yes, Peter, and I don't know but I may say forty thousand. Why, it can't be otherwise, with your habits. Twenty years ago you made off with twenty thousand, which has been increasing ever since. Your personal expenses haven't made very large inroads upon your income, judging from your scarecrow appearance. So much the worse for you. You might have got some good from it. Now it must go to others."

"To others!" exclaimed Peter, turning pale.

"Certainly. You don't think the law gives you whatever you've a mind to steal, do you? Of course, there is no doubt that to your tenants, Eleanor and Charlie Codman, belongs this property which you wrongfully hold."

"They sha'n't have it! They never shall have it!" said Peter Manson hastily.

"Well, perhaps the law may have something to say about that."

"My money!" groaned the miser. "If I lose that, I lose

everything. It will be my death. Good Mr. Randall, have pity on me. I am sure you won't say anything that——"

"Will bring you to State's prison," said Randall coolly.

"They—Eleanor and her son—need never know it."

"Unless I tell them."

"But you won't."

"That depends upon circumstances. How much will you give me to keep the thing secret?"

"Precisely. That is what I have been so long in coming at. You see, Peter, that the secret is worth something.

"What will I give you?"

Either I reveal it to the parties interested, in which case I wouldn't give that!"—snapping his finger—"for your chance of retaining the property, or I keep silence *if you make it worth my while.*"

"Pity me," said the miser abjectly, sinking on his knees before Randall; "pity me, and spare my money."

"Pity you!" said Randall contemptuously. "Why didn't you pity your employer? You must make up your mind to pay me my price."

"I am very poor," whined Peter, in his customary phrase, "and I can't pay much."

"Oh, yes, Peter," said the other sarcastically, "I am well aware that you are poor—wretchedly poor—and I won't be too hard upon you."

"Thank you—thank you," said Peter, catching at this promise. "I will give you something—a little——"

"How much?" asked Randall, with some curiosity.

"Ten dollars!" said the miser, with the air of a man who named a large sum.

"Ten dollars!" returned Randall, with a laugh of derision. "Ten dollars to secure the peaceable possession of thirty thousand! Old man, you must be mad, or you must think that I am."

"I—I did not mean to offend," said the old man humbly. "If I double the sum, will it satisfy you? I—I will try to raise it, though it will be hard—very hard."

"This is mere trifling, Peter Manson," said his visitor decidedly. "Twenty dollars! Why, I wouldn't have come across the street to get it. No, you will have to elevate your ideas considerably."

"How much do you demand?" said the miser, groaning internally, and fixing his eyes anxiously upon Randall.

"You must not make a fuss when I name the amount."

"Name it," said Peter, in a choking voice.

"One thousand dollars will purchase my silence, and not a dollar less."

Peter sprang from his seat in consternation.

"One thousand dollars! Surely you are not in earnest."

"But I am, though. This is not a subject I care to jest upon."

"One thousand dollars! It will take all I have, and leave me a beggar."

"If it should, Peter," said his visitor composedly, "I will procure your admission to the poorhouse, where, if I am

not much mistaken, you will be better off than in this tumble-down old shanty."

"Has the man no mercy?" groaned Peter, wringing his hands.

"None at all."

"Then," exclaimed the miser, in a sudden fit of desperation, "I won't pay you a cent—not a single cent."

"That is your final determination, is it?"

"Ye—Yes," muttered Peter, but less firmly.

"Very well. I will tell you the result. I shall at once go to Eleanor, and inform her of the good fortune which awaits her. No fear but she will pay me a thousand dollars for the intelligence."

"She has no money."

"I will furnish her with money for the lawyers—she can repay me out of your hoards."

Peter groaned.

"Aye, groan away, Peter. You'll have cause enough to groan by and by. There is one thing you don't seem to consider: that the law will do something more than take away your property. I will come to see you in jail."

He rose to leave the room, but Peter called him back hastily. "We may come to terms yet," he said.

"Then you accede to my terms."

"I will give you five hundred."

"Good night, Peter. I wish you happy dreams."

"St-stay!" exclaimed Peter, terrified. "I will give eight hundred."

"I am in something of a hurry," said Randall. "I believe I will call on Eleanor. I don't think we can make any arrangement."

"Hold! Perhaps I will do as you say."

"Ah! now you are beginning to be reasonable," said Randall, resuming his seat.

"What security can you give me for your silence?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Peter. You remember I told you Eleanor had a son, a boy of fourteen."

"Yes."

"His mother is quite devoted to him. Indeed, he contributes to her support by selling papers, and by various little jobs. Now, as long as Eleanor lives here you are in danger."

"Yes."

"And if a blow is leveled at her it must be through her boy."

"I see."

"Then I'll tell you of a scheme I have arranged. You must first know that I am mate of a vessel now in port, which is bound for San Francisco. We are to sail in a few days."

"Well?"

"We hapepn to be in want of a boy to fill up our regular number. Suppose I kidnap Eleanor's boy. Don't you see that, as he is her chief support, she will soon be in difficulties? And this, with her uncertainty about her boy's

fate, may rid you of your greatest peril, and the only one of the two who could identify you."

"Excellent, excellent!" chuckled Peter, rubbing his hands. "She shall yet be sorry that she rejected old Peter."

"Am I to understand that you accede to my proposal, then?"

Not without many groans, Peter agreed to deliver the sum mentioned between them, on condition that the boy was secured.

It was striking ten when Randall left the house. His face beamed with exultation.

"I have done a good night's work," he said. "By working on the fears of the old curmudgeon I have made sure of a thousand dollars. He will be lucky if this is the last money I get out of him. He little thinks that I, too, have a revenge to wreak. He is not the only one that has been scornfully rejected by Eleanor Godman. Now to bed, and to-morrow shall see my work commenced."

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLIE AT HOME.

The tenement-house owned by Peter Manson was a three-story wooden building, very much in need of paint. It was scarcely likely to be pointed out by any one as one of the architectural ornaments of the city. Years before it had fallen into Peter's hands at a small price, and he had every year since realized from it in the way of rent a sum equal to one-half the purchase-money. No one who has lived in a city can help knowing how much more proportionally the poor are compelled to pay for their scanty and insufficient accommodations than the rich, or those in moderate circumstances. No class of property is made to pay a larger percentage than the wretched tenement-houses, which seem adapted to furnish as little accommodation as possible to those who are compelled to occupy them.

The tenement-house in which Charlie and his mother lived was no better than the average. It was the home of a large number of persons of various occupations. Seamstresses, mechanics, washerwomen, and many others found a home under this one roof.

Mrs. Codman occupied a room on the second floor. As one entered the room it was easy to see what a charm can

be thrown around even the humblest place by the presence of refinement and good taste. All the appointments of the room, indeed, were of the cheapest description. Probably the furniture did not exceed in cost that of the room opposite. Yet there was a considerable difference in the appearance of Mrs. Codman's room and that of Sally Price.

The old-fashioned windows were washed as clean as water could make them, so as to admit all the sunshine which could find its way over the tall roof on the opposite side of the street. They were hung with plain chintz curtains, separated in the middle and looped on either side. The floor was quite clean as far as it could be seen. In the center was spread a floor-cloth some eight feet square, which relieved its bareness. There was a small round table near the window, and a small square work-table of no very costly material in another part of the room. On this was placed a rose bush in a flower-pot. It had been given to Charlie by an old gentleman who had taken a fancy to him.

In another place was a home-made lounge, the work of Charlie's hands. It had originally been a wooden box, given him by a shopkeeper near-by. This box had been covered with calico stuffed with cotton, so that it made quite a comfortable seat. It was used, besides, as a wood-box, its legitimate province; but when the cover was closed it was, nevertheless, a very respectable article of furniture. There were, besides, a few plain wooden chairs and a small rocking-chair for Mrs. Codman. Opening out of the main

room was a small bedroom, occupied by the mother, while Charlie had a bed made up for him at night in the common sitting-room.

A few books—a very few—were piled upon the little table. They were chiefly school-books—an arithmetic, a geography, and an atlas, over which Charlie would generally spend a portion of every evening, and occasionally a boy's book, lent him by his friend, Edwin Bangs, who, together with his brothers, had quite a large juvenile library.

Mrs. Codman was sitting by the window, industriously engaged in needle-work, and intent on accomplishing a certain amount before nightfall. She was past thirty-five, yet, in spite of the trials which have left their impress on her brow, she would readily be taken for five years younger. She had drawn her chair to the window, to make the most of the rapidly fading daylight, as with swift fingers she plied the glistening needle.

There was a hasty step on the stairs, a stamping at the door, and in rushed a bright, handsome boy, with rosy cheeks and dark hair.

The mother's face lighted up with a bright smile as she turned to her son, the only one she had left to love.

"You're a little later than usual, Charlie, are you not?" she said.

"A little, mother. You see, I didn't get a job till late, and then two came together."

"What were they?"

"A gentleman wanted me to take his grip from the

Maine depot, and I had to carry it away up to Rutland Street."

"Did he go with you?"

"No; he had to go to his office in State Street."

"Was he willing to trust you? Some boys might have made off with the bag, and he would never have seen it again."

"He thought of that, but he said—and I think he's a real gentleman—that he knew I was honest by my appearance, and he was willing to trust me."

"Quite complimentary, Charlie. How much did he pay you for your trouble?"

"Half a dollar."

"Then you have done a good deal better than I have. I have been working all day, and shall not realize more than twenty-five cents for my labor."

"I wish you didn't have to work at all, mother."

"Thank you, Charlie; but I dare say I am happier for having something to do. I wish I could get better pay for my work. But you haven't told me what the other errand was. You said you had two."

"Yes," said Charlie; "I had just got back from Rutland Street, and had bought two or three evening papers which I was going to try to sell, when a man came up to me, and, after looking at me for a minute or two, asked me if I would take a little walk with him. He said he was a stranger in Boston, and didn't know his way about much. He asked me if I had lived here long and what my name

was. He told me he would pay me if I would go around with him and point out some of the public buildings. He told me he would pay me at the rate of twenty-five cents an hour for my time. I told him I had one or two papers to dispose of.

"'Never mind about them,' said he, 'I will take them off your hands.'

"'But they are alike,' said I.

"'Never mind,' he answered; so he paid me the full price for two *Journals* and two *Transcripts,* and off we went."

"What sort of a person was he?"

"He was a stout man, over forty, and looked to me like a sailor. I shouldn't wonder if he was an officer of some ship."

"Did you like his looks?"

"Why," said Charlie, hesitatingly, "not exactly; not so much as I did of the other gentleman. There was something about his eye which I didn't like. Still, he acted up to his agreement, and paid me all he promised."

"How long were you together?"

"About an hour and a half. We walked round the Common and the Public Garden, went into the State House and the Public Library. However, he didn't seem to care much about them. He seemed to take more interest in me, somehow, and asked me a good many questions; whether I had any parents living, and how long I had

lived in the city. When I told him you were born in Havana, he said he used to live there himself."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Codman.

"He also told me that he might like to have me go round with him again, and told me to call to-morrow at the Quincy House, where he is stopping. But, mother, isn't it most time for supper? Here, just let me set the table, if you are busy."

"Very well, Charlie; I shall be glad to have you do so, as I am in a hurry to finish my sewing."

In the evening Charlie read to his mother while she sewed. Neither of them suspected that it was the last evening they would spend together for several months.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPTAIN BRACE.

Lying at one of the wharves was a ship of moderate size, evidently fast getting ready for sea. The cargo had all been stowed away, and, notwithstanding the confusion, it was easy even for a landsman to see that the ship was about ready for departure.

The ship was the *Bouncing Betsy,* commanded by Captain Nathaniel Brace. He was a short, stout, broad-shouldered man. He was no fresh-water captain, but from the age of thirteen had been tossing about on the ocean. He had little education beyond what was required by his profession, and was utterly lacking in refinement and courtesy. He was not an amiable man, but rough, stormy, exacting, and dictatorial. The crew under his command he looked upon as so many machines, whose duty it was to obey him with scrupulous exactness, whatever might be the nature of his requisitions. When he got into one of his fits of passion he would stamp and rave, kicking and striking this way and that with the most reckless disregard of human lives and human feelings. In fact, he was one of those pests of the merchant service, an unfeeling tyrant, who did all in his power to degrade the profession which he had

adopted, and add to the hardships which lie in the path of the sailor.

The employers of Captain Brace were far from being aware of the extent to which he carried the severity of his discipline; brutality, indeed, would be the more appropriate word. They supposed him to be a strict commander, who liked to preserve a proper subordination in those under his command, and this they were disposed to commend rather than to complain of, more especially as the captain was master of his profession, and had usually made quick and profitable voyages. This, as may be supposed, was enough to cover a great many defects in the eyes of those whose pecuniary interest he subserved, even if the captain had not been shrewd enough to conceal his more disagreeable traits when on shore under an affectation of bluff frankness.

Without dwelling further on the personal characteristics of Captain Brace, with whom we shall have abundant opportunity to become acquainted, since we purpose going to sea with him on his approaching voyage, we introduce him pacing the deck of his vessel, with a short black pipe in his mouth, on the very morning he intends to sail.

"Where is Mr. Randall? Has he come on board?" he inquired, turning to the second mate.

"No, sir; I have not seen him this morning," was the reply.

"When he comes on board tell him I wish to see him immediately."

"Very well, sir."

The captain went to his cabin, and about five minutes later the individual after whom he inquired came aboard. We recognize in him an old acquaintance; no other than the nocturnal visitor who excited such fearful apprehensions in the mind of old Peter Manson, the miser.

"Where is Captain Brace, Mr. Bigelow?" he inquired of the second mate.

"In the cabin, Mr. Randall. He wishes to see you."

"And I wish to see him, so we can suit each other's convenience. How long since did he ask for me?"

"Only two or three minutes. He has just gone below."

"Then he hasn't had long to wait."

With these words, he hastened to the cabin, where he found the captain waiting for him.

The subject on which the captain wished to see his first mate was purely of a professional and technical character, and when this preliminary matter was disposed of, Randall, with a little hesitation, remarked: "I have a little favor to ask of you, Captain Brace."

"Very well, sir; let me know what it is, and if I can conveniently grant it I will."

"The boy who had engaged to go with us has backed out, having heard some ridiculous stories about your severity and——"

The captain's brow grew dark with anger, as he said:

"The young rascal! I should like to overhaul him! I'd show him what it is to see service!"

There is very little doubt that the captain would have kept his word.

Randall took care not to inform his superior officer that he had privately communicated to the mother of the boy intelligence of his severity, not from any motives of humanity, but simply because his going would have interfered with his own plans in respect to Charlie.

"We shall not have much time to hunt up a boy if we sail at three o'clock," said the captain. "I don't see but we must go without one."

"I think I can supply you with one, Captain Brace."

"Ha! who is it?"

"It is a nephew of mine, and the favor I spoke of was that you should take him in place of the other boy."

"Humph!" said the captain, "there is one objection I have to taking relations of the officers. You are expected to be tender to them, and not order them about as roughly as the rest."

"There won't be any trouble of that sort in this case, Captain Brace, you may be very sure," said the mate. "Although the boy is my nephew, I don't feel any very extraordinary affection for him."

"I should think not," said the captain, with a grim smile, "from your efforts to get him a place on board this ship. You're not any more gentle with boys than I am."

"The fact is, Captain Brace," said Randall, with a smile which evinced a thorough understanding of the captain's meaning—"the fact is, the boy is unruly, and they can't

do much for him at home, and I thought it might be well for him to try a voyage or two, *for the benefit of his health!*"

The mate smiled, and as it was such a joke as the captain could appreciate, he smiled, too.

"Very well, Mr. Randall; if such are your views, I have no objection to his coming on board."

"I had fears," continued the mate, "that his unruly temper would interfere with his usefulness at home. I felt pretty sure we could soon cure him of that."

"*Kill or cure,* that's my motto," said the captain.

"Sometimes both," thought Randall, remembering one boy in a previous voyage who had languished and died under the cruel treatment he experienced on board.

"Does the boy know he is to go with us?" inquired the captain.

"Bless you, no; not he! He'd make a fuss if he did."

"How do you intend to get him on board, then?"

"I shall invite him to come and see the vessel, and when he is down below I can take care that he stays there till we are fairly at sea."

"A good plan. What is the youngster's name, Mr. Randall?"

"Jack Randall; named after me."

"Humph! Hope he'll do credit to the name," said the captain grimly. "I leave in your hands all the steps

necessary to securing him. Remember, if you please, that we shall sail at three."

"I will be on board before that time, sir, and bring my nephew with me."

"Very well, sir."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLUE CHEST.

On leaving the *Bouncing Betsy,* Mr. John Randall, the estimable mate of that vessel, bent his steps toward a shop devoted to sailors' ready-made clothing, with a large variety of other articles such as seamen are accustomed to require.

It was a shop of very good dimensions, but low-studded and rather dark, the windows, which were few, being in part covered up by articles hung in front of them.

The proprietor of this establishment was Moses Mellen, a little man, keen-eyed, and always on the alert for business. He had one qualification for a successful trader—he seldom or never forgot a face which he had once seen.

Rubbing his hands with a great show of cordiality, and with his face wreathed in smiles, the instant he espied Randall he hastened to meet him.

"Delighted to see you, Mr. Randall," he exclaimed; "perhaps I ought to say Captain Randall."

"Not yet."

"Ah, well, that will come soon. I hope you have had a prosperous voyage."

"Tolerably so, Mr. Mellen."

"Have you just arrived in the city, or have you been here for some time?"

"Three weeks only, and now I am off again. We sailors don't have a chance to stop long on land, Mr. Mellen."

"Not if they are such capital sailors as my friend, Mr. Randall. But where are you bound this time?"

"Probably to Brazil."

"Anywhere else?"

"Perhaps so. We may go to the Indies, or Sandwich Islands, before we return."

"A long voyage—you will need a good outfit before you start—don't you want something in my line? I sha'n't want much profit out of an old friend like you."

"Yes, I shall want a few things. I will pick them out now."

"This way, then, please."

Randall followed the proprietor to the back of the store, where he selected a variety of articles, which he ordered sent on board the *Bouncing Betsy* at once.

"Now," said the mate, after his own purchases were completed, "I shall require a small outfit for a boy who is going out with us."

"If you had brought him with you, we could have furnished him at short order."

"There was one little difficulty in the way of my doing that."

"Eh?"

"He doesn't know he is going."

"Ah-ha!" said the dealer, raising his eyebrows significantly; "that's it, is it?"

"I see you comprehend. Now tell me what shall we do about fitting him?"

"If I could only see him——"

"You could judge by your eye what would be likely to fit him. Is that what you would say?"

"Precisely."

"And how long would you require to look at him?"

"Two minutes would answer."

"Very well; I will call with the boy in the course of an hour or two. By the way, I shall want a small chest to put the articles in. You keep them, of course?"

"A great variety."

"I dare say you will suit me. A very plain one will answer. Have your bill all made out for the other articles, and I will pay it."

"All right, Mr. Randall. It shall be done," and the dealer bowed out his customer.

The mate now betook himself to the hotel where he had engaged Charlie to meet him at eleven o'clock. Charlie, who was always punctual to his appointments, had already arrived, and was looking over a newspaper in the reading-room.

"So you are on hand, my boy," said Randall, in a friendly manner.

"Yes, sir."

"I am glad to find you punctual. Are you ready to set out?"

"Yes, sir, quite ready."

To keep up the boy's delusion as to his designs, Randall suffered Charlie to guide him to one or two places of public interest, with which he was already more familiar than his guide, and then suddenly proposed that they should go down to the wharves.

"You must know, my lad," said he, "that I am a sailor."

"I thought so, sir."

"What made you think so?"

"I don't know, sir; but I can generally tell a sailor."

"Perhaps I haven't got my sea-legs off. However, as I was saying, I am an officer on board a ship, and I have just thought of a bundle I want brought from the vessel. If you will go with me and fetch it, I will pay you at the same rate I promised you for going about with me."

Of course, Charlie had no objections. In fact, although he had been on board ships, he had never been in company with an officer. Accordingly, he gave a ready assent to the mate's proposition, and together they took their way to Long Wharf, at which the ship was lying.

"I feel more at home in this neighborhood," said Randall.

"Yes," said Charlie, "I suppose so."

By this time they had reached the clothing-store kept by Moses Mellen.

"I have a little errand here," said Randall, pausing at the door.

"I can stop outside," said Charlie.

"You had better come in. You will see where we sailors get our clothing."

Not suspecting any sinister design in this invitation, Charlie accepted it without more ado, and followed Randall in. He looked about him with some curiosity, not observing that he, too, was an object of attention to the proprietor, whose quick eye detected their entrance.

He went forward to meet Randall.

"You see the boy, do you?" said the mate, in a low tone.

"Is that the one?"

"Yes. Do you think you will be able to fit him?"

"No doubt about it, sir, though he is a little smaller than the boys we usually fit out."

"Never mind if the clothes are a little large. He'll be sure to grow to them, and a precise fit isn't quite so important on the quarter-deck as it might be on Washington Street. We are not fashionable on board the *Betsy,* Mr. Mellen."

The dealer laughed.

"Have you made out my bill?"

"Here it is."

"While I am looking it over, will you pick out such clothes as the boy will need?"

Darting a hasty glance at Charlie, to make sure of his size, the dealer hurried to the rear of the shop, and com-

menced selecting articles, which he laid away in a small blue chest.

This task was soon completed, and again he came out to the front part of the store.

"All ready!" he said, in a low voice to Randall.

"You have been quick. Here is the amount of your bill. As to the chest, you may send it on board the *Bouncing Betsy* without any unnecessary delay."

"It shall be done, Mr. Randall. Have you no further commands for us?"

"I believe not to-day."

"You will remember us when you are around again, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, I won't forget you."

Randall issued from the shop, followed by Charlie.

"Now, my lad," said Randall, "we'll go on board the vessel. Have you ever been on board a ship?"

"Yes, indeed, a good many times by myself, but I never had any one to tell me the different parts."

"I'll promise, then," said the mate, in a tone whose significance was lost upon our hero at the time, though he afterward recalled it, "that you shall know more about a vessel before you leave this one."

"I thank you," said Charlie, considering the offer a kind one.

They ascended the ladder, and jumped upon the deck of the vessel, which, though Charlie knew it not, was to be his home for many a weary day.

CHAPTER IX.

ON BOARD.

They had scarcely set their feet upon deck, when they encountered Captain Brace.

The mate glanced significantly at the boy by his side, and carelessly put his fingers to his lips in token of silence, at the same time saying: "A lad whom I have promised to initiate into some of the mysteries of seamanship."

"He may find the knowledge useful to him some time," said the captain, with a grim smile. "Do you think you should like going to sea, my lad?"

"No, sir," returned Charles promptly, "I don't think I should."

"Why not?"

"I should get tired of seeing the sea all the time."

"You would get used to it."

"I never should like it so well as the land. Besides, I should not like to leave my mother."

"Well, my lad, if you should ever change your mind," said the captain, with a wicked glance at Randall, "I hope you'll give me the first offer of your services."

"Yes, sir," said our hero, thinking the captain very affable and polite, though, to be sure, his appearance was hardly as prepossessing as it might have been.

"The captain seems to be a very nice man," said Randall, after that officer had left them.

"Oh, yes," answered Randall dryly, "a very fine man the captain is. I'm glad you like him."

"Have you been to sea a long time?" inquired Charlie.

"Yes, I have been ever since I was a boy."

"Do you like it?"

"Very much. It seems like home to me now. I shouldn't be willing to live on land for any length of time."

"Did you begin very young?"

"I was about sixteen. How old are you?"

"Almost fourteen. I shall be fourteen next month."

"You are a very good size for your age."

"Yes," said Charlie, with boyish pride, drawing himself up to his full height. Like most boys, he liked to be told he was large of his age.

"My father was quite a large man," he added.

"I know it," muttered Randall to himself, as the handsome face and manly form of the father rose before him. They were imprinted more vividly upon his memory, because he felt that it was these very advantages which had enabled his rival to succeed in winning the prize for which he had vainly contended.

"Did you speak?" said Charlie, hearing indistinctly the words which his companion muttered.

"No," said Randall shortly. "But I promised to show

you something about the vessel. I suppose you know the names of the masts."

"Yes, sir."

"What do they call this?"

"This is the mainmast," answered Charlies promptly, "and the others are called the foremast and mizzenmast."

"That is right; I suppose the masts seem high to you."

"Yes, very high," said Charlie, stretching his neck to enable him to see the top.

"Then you don't think you should like to go aloft?" said Randall, playing with him as a cat plays with a mouse.

"I don't believe I could. It would make me dizzy."

"You could do better than you think for, if you were obliged to."

"Perhaps I might," said Charlie doubtfully. "Do the boys on board ship have to go up there?"

"I had to when I was a boy."

"Weren't you afraid?"

"I suppose I was, but that didn't do any good—I had to go."

"Weren't you afraid of losing your hold?"

"Yes, but it isn't often a boy loses his hold going up the first time. He is so frightened that he clings to the ropes with a pretty tight grip. But after he gets used to it—and it doesn't seem any worse than going up-stairs—he is apt to grow careless, and then there is sometimes an accident."

"Then I suppose they fall on deck and are instantly killed," said Charlie, shuddering.

"Not always, for when the ship is in progress it leans a good deal, so that they are more likely to fall overboard."

"And get drowned?"

"Sometimes. They can't always keep up till assistance comes, especially if they can't swim. Sometimes their fall is broken by the rigging, and they manage to save themselves by catching hold."

They visited other parts of the ship, and Randall continued his explanations. The sailors were all on board, at work in various ways. They did not appear to notice the mate and his young companion when they passed, but Charlie, chancing to look behind, observed one making a significant gesture to another, which evidently referred to them.

About this time a porter arrived from the clothing-store, bringing a small blue chest.

"This is the ship *Bouncing Betsy,* isn't it?" he inquired.

"Yes," answered one of the sailors.

"I was told to bring this chest here, then."

"Who is it for?"

"Jack Randall."

"That's the mate, you lubber. Why don't you put a handle to his name?"

"No, it's for a boy."

"We haven't got any such boy aboard as I knows on."

"There ain't two ships of this name, are there?"

"Not as I ever heerd tell."

"Then this must be the ship. Where shall I stow this chest? I've got tired of bringing it on my back."

"You'd better go and speak to the mate about it. There he stands. Mayhap that's the boy the kit belongs to."

The porter walked forward.

"Does this belong to you?" he asked, laying down the chest.

"Yes."

"Then it wasn't for a boy?"

"Yes," answered the mate carelessly. "It is for a nephew of mine who is going with us this voyage."

"Is that the young gentleman?" asked the porter, pointing to Charlie.

"He thinks you're my nephew," said Randall, smiling. "A good joke, isn't it?"

"This young gentleman is only looking about the ship a little," he answered. "He don't think he should fancy going to sea."

"Beg pardon, I didn't know but he might be the one."

"Oh, no, certainly not."

"Shall I leave the chest here?"

"Yes, anywhere. No, you may carry it below. Here," summoning one of the sailors, "show this man where to put this chest."

"So your nephew is going to sea," said Charlie, with some curiosity.

"Yes."

"Does he think he shall like to go?"

"I don't believe he thinks much about it."

"How large a boy is he?"

"I should think he is about as large as you. Yes, come to think of it, I don't believe there can be any difference between you."

The joke was a cruel one, as Charlie found to his cost before long.

"Is he on board now?"

"I don't see him," said the mate, looking in the opposite direction from where Charlie was standing. "But I think he will be on board very soon. Were you ever dressed in sailor's clothes?"

"Never," said our hero.

"I wonder how you would look. You are just about my nephew's size. Have you any objection to trying on his clothes?"

Charlie had not. In fact, he was rather curious to learn how he should look in this unusual attire. Accordingly he went below, and was soon dressed in full sailor-rig. It was a very good fit, and very becoming.

"A good fit, is it not?" asked the mate.

"Excellent," said Charlie.

"One would almost think the clothes were meant for you," said Randall, with a smile which Charlie did not understand.

CHAPTER X.

CHARLIE IN A TIGHT PLACE.

Charlie surveyed himself in his new attire with some complacency. He felt that it was becoming, and it gave him a new feeling of manliness. In fact, it seemed to him for the time being, as if he were really a sailor. Charlie, however, though he was very well pleased with his sailor's rig, did not feel in the least tempted to wear it professionally. Accordingly, after the survey was over, he began to divest himself of it.

"What are you doing?" asked the mate, laying his hand heavily upon his shoulder.

"Taking off your nephew's clothes," returned Charlie, looking up in considerable surprise at the tone in which he was addressed.

"What's that for?"

"To put on my own."

"Then you needn't trouble yourself," said Randall composedly; "those you have on are your own."

"What do you mean?" asked Charlie, meeting the mate's look with an open, manly glance.

"I mean," said Randall, "that the clothes were bought for the one who now wears them."

"Bought for me!" exclaimed Charlie, in great bewilderment.

"Yes. You wondered how they happened to fit you so well. That is easily explained. They were picked out on purpose for you. The old Jew in the clothing-store took your measure with his eye while you were standing here with me. Faith, he's got a pretty sharp eye."

"But your nephew?" said Charlie, his heart sinking, as he began to comprehend the plot to which he had fallen a victim; "I thought you said they belonged to him."

"Well," said Randall, with a harsh laugh, "you're my nephew."

"I am not," said Charlie, with something of haughtiness in his tone, as he surveyed the mate scornfully.

"He's got his mother's look," muttered the latter. "That's the way she looked when she sent me about my business. She'd look something different, I fancy, if she knew I'd got her boy in my power. I've got the whiphand of her now, and she'll live yet to repent the day she rejected Jack Randall."

These thoughts flashed through his mind in an instant, and did not prevent his answering at once Charlie's bold denial.

"There's a little too much pride about you, youngster. It'll need taming down. You're to be my nephew while you're aboard this ship. Remember, your name is Jack Randall. Take care that you claim no other."

"What good will that do?" said Charlie. "I'm not going to remain on board."

"You're not, eh?" said the mate significantly.

"No," said Charlie boldly.

"Suppose I say you shall."

"Then," said Charlie firmly, "I say you are mistaken." He commenced tugging away at his blue jacket with the intention of pulling it off.

"What are you doing?" asked Randall, with a frown, advancing and laying a heavy hand on the boy's shoulder. "Haven't I told you to keep those clothes on?"

"You have no right to interfere with me," said Charlie, stoutly, his eye flashing with indignation. "Give me back my clothes."

"You can't have them. If you strip off those you have on, you'll have to go without any."

Exasperated, Charlie made a spring forward, and attempted to wrest his clothes from the hands of the mate.

"Ha, my fine fellow!" exclaimed Randall, as, evading the boy's grasp, he lifted them beyond his reach. "So you are inclined to be mutinous, are you? Very well, we have a remedy for all such cases, and a very simple one it is."

So saying, he drew a stout cord from his pocket, and advanced toward the boy with the intention of binding him.

Charlie sprang for the stairs, and was half-way up before the mate caught him and dragged him back.

"Well, boy, you're a pretty tough customer—true grit.

You're just the boy to make a sailor of. I must make sure of you."

So saying, he succeeded, in spite of Charlie's vigorous exertions, in tying his hands and feet. Not until thus rendered quite helpless did the brave boy suffer himself to burst into tears.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked.

"I am going to make a sailor of you," answered the mate.

"But I don't want to go to sea," answered Charlie.

"So you said once before, but you'll change your mind before long."

"My mother will not know where I am. She can't get along without me, for she depends upon me in part for support."

"I dare say she'll get along somehow," said Randall coolly. "She won't miss you much, and she ought to feel glad that your uncle has taken charge of you."

"Uncle!" retorted the boy, with flashing eyes. "I wouldn't own you as uncle for all the money in Boston."

"You wouldn't!" said Randall, his tone changing, and a dark look overspreading his face. "Very well, my bold lad, you may have reason to repent those words. You may find out by and by that it is as well to be civil to your superior officer. I will do nothing about it now, but when we are out of port and fairly at sea, look out!"

Charlie, who was quick-witted, caught a hint from these words, and at once set up a scream, hoping to draw attention from outside.

"That's your game, is it?" said the mate. "We'll soon stop that."

So saying, he drew out the boy's own handkerchief, and gagged him so that there was no further fear of his being able to make any disturbance which could be heard on the wharf or on neighboring vessels.

Feeling now secure, he left Charlie mute and helpless, and ascended to the deck.

"What was the noise I heard below, Mr. Randall?" asked the captain, pausing in his walk and addressing his first officer.

"My nephew!" said Randall, with a smile.

"Ha! he is a little obstreperous, is he?"

"A trifle so."

"Doesn't like the society of his uncle sufficiently to want to go to sea with him, I suppose?"

"I dare say he would like to change his quarters," said Randall composedly.

"How did you reconcile him to his fate?"

"A couple of strong cords and a gag did the business. They will keep him quiet till we get out to sea, and then perhaps we can discover some other means of bringing him to terms."

"A slightly different application of the cords, perhaps, Mr. Randall."

The mate smiled approval of this jest, and as his services were now in requisition to expedite preparations for departure, he left the captain and went about his duty.

Meanwhile, the mate's conduct had not been unobserved by the crew. Among these was an old sailor who rejoiced in the name of Bill Sturdy. It is needless to say that this was not his real name. No one appeared to know what his real name was, and he had become so used to this that he generally called himself so. The name Sturdy had probably been given him on account of his sturdy make. He was stout and very powerful. Probably there were no two men on board the ship who would not have felt some hesitation in attacking Bill Sturdy.

It may be added that the name was no less appropriate if we consider it bestowed on account of his character and disposition. He was unpolished enough, having beaten about the world all his life, yet he had been gifted by nature with a fund of sturdy common sense and powers of observation which made him more thoughtful and intelligent than most of his class. He had a kind heart, and hated to see oppression. This was his first voyage on board the *Bouncing Betsy;* the ship on which he had last served having been wrecked, and he with a few others having, with difficulty, saved themselves. Since he had engaged on board the *Betsy,* the stories he had heard of the captain's brutality led him to repent of his determination, and he had resolved within himself to remain on board but a single voyage.

He had had his attention drawn to Charlie and the mate, and he observed that the latter came up alone from below.

"That's a trim, handsome little lad," he said to himself:

"I wonder what the mate is so attentive to him for. There's some deviltry in the wind, as sure as my name is Bill Sturdy. I hope, for the boy's sake, he isn't going to ship with us. If he does, I must do what I can for him, for I mistrust he'll want a friend."

CHAPTER XI.

OFF TO SEA.

The thoughts of Charlie Codman, as he lay helpless, gagged and bound, were hardly of the most cheerful character. The blow had been so sudden that he was quite unprepared for it. Added to this, his apprehensions were vague and indefinite. There seemed something mysterious about the manner in which he had been spirited away, and this thought increased his feeling of discomfort. A danger which can be measured and comprehended in its full extent may be boldly faced, however great, but when we are ignorant of its nature and extent that is not so easy.

Charlie understood as much as this, that it was the intention of Randall to carry him off to sea. But why he should have taken such pains to ensnare him, when there are always plenty of boys glad to obtain such a situation, he could not conceive.

Charlie was no coward. He was no stranger to the bold spirit of adventure by which boys of his age are apt to be animated. Indeed, under different circumstances, and if the arrangement had been of his own free choice, it is quite possible that he might have looked forward with

pleasurable anticipations to the life that awaited him. But there was one thought uppermost in his mind that gave him no little pain and anxiety, the thought of his mother. He was her all. In the large and busy city she knew very few persons; she had none whom she could call friends. Her hopes were all centered in him. It was in a great measure owing to his activity and industry that she had been able to live with a degree of comfort, for though she was always at work, the avenues of industry open to women are few, and toil at the needle is so unsatisfactorily compensated that Charlie, though working fewer hours, was able to contribute considerably more than half of the sum required for their joint support.

How would his mother get along during his absence, the length of which he could not estimate? Would she suffer not only in mind but in bodily discomfort? Well he remembered how pleasantly the evenings had passed when they were together. Now there must be a long separation. Would he ever see his mother again? She would not be able to retain their present lodging, now that the entire rent would fall to her to pay. Perhaps when he did return he should be unable to obtain any clue to her whereabouts. This was, indeed, a terrible thought to poor Charlie, who chafed like a caged lion in his confinement. He endeavored to unloose the cords which bound him, but with little prospect of success; for no one better than a sailor understands the art of tying a knot securely.

While Charlie was doing his utmost to free himself

from the cords that bound him, having already removed the gag, he was startled by a low laugh of triumphant malice.

Looking up, he saw the mate, the author of all his misfortunes, watching him with great apparent enjoyment.

"Ah, Jack," he said, "I see you are hard at work. Work away. If you untie those knots, you've got more skillful fingers than the one that tied them, that's all."

"Come and release me," said Charlie. "You have no right to keep me here."

"You are mistaken," said the mate coolly. "I have the best of all rights."

"And what right is that?" demanded our hero.

"The right of power!" answered Randall. "Might makes right, perhaps you have heard."

"How long are you going to keep me here?" asked Charlie, after a pause.

"Till we get far enough out to sea to make it safe to release you."

Charlie kept silence. He felt that it would be useless to appeal to the mercy of the mate, who appeared bent upon carrying him away. He turned his face resolutely away from Randall, for whom he began to entertain a stronger dislike than he had supposed himself capable of feeling. Hitherto he had only been accustomed to an atmosphere of affection, and though he had met with some rebuffs in his daily search for employment, he could always return at night to a home and a mother, with whom

he could forget whatever had been disagreeable during the day. Now his position was entirely changed. The only one he knew on board the vessel was one whom he had no reason to believe friendly, but very much the reverse.

By this time the noise upon deck, which he could hear plainly, had become greater and greater. He could hear frequent orders given by the captain, and also by the mate, who had now returned to his post.

Soon the vessel appeared to be moving. He could hear the plashing of the water against its sides. He felt that it was in motion, slow at first, but afterward more rapid. He conjectured that the ship was being towed out to sea by a steam-tug.

He wished that at least he could get to a window, and catch a last glimpse of the land to which he was about to bid so unexpected a farewell. But this, tied hand and foot as he was, was impossible, and he felt that now it would do him no good even if he should succeed in breaking his bonds. Already they were speeding out to sea as fast as the tug could convey them. There was no redress or help for him beyond the limits of the vessel in which the tyrants exercised absolute control, for he felt well assured that Captain Brace was in league with the mate, or, at all events, would interpose his authority to support Randall in his plans.

So time sped on, the ship continuing all the while in steady motion.

At length the tug left them and returned to the city, leaving the vessel to shift for itself. Although Charlie could not see what was going on, he judged this from the noise and shouts of command given above, to which he listened with sharpened attention.

Charlie felt that with the departure of the steam-tug all possibility of escape had passed. The last link which had bound him to the shore had been snapped asunder.

While he was plunged in sorrowful thought he suddenly heard a step descending.

Thinking it was the mate, of whom he felt that he should see in future much more than he cared, he did not turn his head.

"Hello, my lad," was the salutation of the newcomer, in a rough, but hearty voice, "how came you in this trim?"

It was not the mate's harsh voice. Quickly turning round, Charlie's eyes rested on the bronzed but good-humored face of Bill Sturdy. Whatever may be thought of physiognomy as an index of character, it is undeniable that we are either attracted to or repelled by certain faces.

Now, the first sight of Bill Sturdy's honest and good-humored face seemed to Charlie like a ray of light in a dark place. He felt that he was a man to be trusted.

"Will you be a friend to me?" asked Charlie, with instinctive confidence.

"That I will, my lad," exclaimed Bill, with hearty emphasis; "but tell me who tied you up in this fashion?"

"His name is Randall, and I believe he is the mate."

"The lubberly rascal! And what did he do that for?"

"He entrapped me on board the vessel, and now he is carrying me out to sea, against my will."

"How came you in your sailor's rig?" asked Sturdy.

Charlie explained the trick which had been practiced upon him.

"He's a rascal; there ain't a doubt of that," said Bill. "I should like to overhaul him, and teach him better manners. As for you, my lad, I'm sorry for you. You've shipped for the v'y'ge, and there ain't any help for it, as I see. But you may depend upon one thing, old Bill Sturdy will look out for you, and will be your friend."

"Thank you," said Charlie, feeling more cheerful and hopeful. It was something to have one friend on board.

"I mistrust there are some rascals abroad," muttered Bill to himself, as he went up on deck. "They'd better not interfere with me or that young lad!" and he extended his muscular arm with a sense of power.

CHAPTER XII.

LANDLORD AND TENANT.

The payment of a thousand dollars to Randall had been a severe blow to old Peter Manson, and this consideration materially lessened the satisfaction which he felt in Charlie's removal. The drain upon his hoard induced him to count over his possessions. Preparatory to doing so, he carefully secured the outer door, and also the door of the apartment which he occupied.

Then, lifting up a plank from the floor, he raised from beneath a large box containing coins and bills. It was very heavy, and it was not without difficulty that the old man, who was very feeble, succeeded in lifting it to a level with the floor.

The old man surveyed it with a groan.

"It might have been full," he muttered, "if I hadn't been obliged to pay away such a sight of money to that determined man. One thousand dollars! How many, many weary days it will take before I can supply their place."

While Peter was indulging in this soliloquy, he was engaged in counting the money in the box.

The result of the count showed less than he had anticipated.

The old man turned pale.

"Some one has robbed me," he muttered. "Or, perchance, I have counted wrong. I will go over it again."

This he did with eager haste, and a feeling of nervous anxiety, and, to his no small dismay, the count resulted as before.

"They have taken my money!" exclaimed Peter, tearing his white hair in anguish. "They will make me a beggar, and I shall be reduced to want in my old age. Oh, oh!"

In the midst of his lamentations he suddenly discovered the missing coin, which had rolled away, without his observing it, to the opposite side of the room.

Chuckling with delight, he picked it up and replaced it in the box.

His duty satisfactorily performed, the miser put on his cloak, and prepared for another task. This was to raise Mrs. Codman's rent, and so compel her to leave the rooms which she rented from him. This, however, was unnecessary, since, deprived of Charlie's earnings, his mother would have found it impossible to pay the rent previously demanded.

Peter Manson resolved to call upon his tenant in person. He was not afraid of recognition. He felt that the changes which twenty years had wrought in his appearance would be a sufficient protection. Indeed, this had already been tested; for Peter had already called several times on the same errand, without attracting a glance which could be construed into recognition.

It was the morning after Charlie had disappeared. He had been absent twenty-four hours, and his mother had heard nothing of him. She was in a terrible state of apprehension and anxiety, for few boys were more regular than he in returning home as soon as his daily duties were over.

Mrs. Codman had sat up late into the night, hoping against her fears that he would return. At length, exhausted by her vigils, she sank upon the bed, but not to sleep. In the morning she rose, unrefreshed, to prepare her solitary meal. But it was in vain. Sorrow and anxiety had taken away her appetite, and she was unable to eat anything.

Soon afterward a knock was heard at the door. She hastened to open it, hoping to hear some tidings of her lost boy. What was her disappointment to meet the bent form and wrinkled face of Peter Manson, her landlord.

The old man gave her a stealthy glance.

"Why did I not know her before?" he thought. "She is not so very much changed. But I—ha, ha! she don't know who I am."

Mrs. Codman went to a drawer in her bureau, and took therefrom six dollars.

"This is the amount of your rent, I believe," she said.

The old man greedily closed his fingers upon the money, and then, after intimating that it was very small, avowed his determination to raise the rent to two dollars per week.

The miser watched with gleeful exultation the look of dismay which came over the face of his tenant.

Two dollars a week was not only beyond Mrs. Codman's means, but was, at that time, an exorbitant rent for the rooms which she occupied. She would scarcely have been justified in paying it while she had Charlie's earnings as well as her own to depend on. Yet there seemed now an imperative necessity for remaining where she was, for a time at least. It was possible that Charlie would come back, and if she should remove, where would he find her? Of course, he would come back! The thought that there was even a possibility of her son being lost to her was so full of shuddering terror, that Mrs. Codman would not for a moment indulge it.

She resolved to make an effort to arouse the old man's compassion. She did not dream of the spite and hatred which he felt toward her. There are none whom the wicked hate so heartily as those whom they have injured. That is something beyond forgiveness.

Mrs. Codman knew that Peter Manson was avaricious, and to this she attributed the increase in the rent. She had no suspicion that he had a particular object in distressing her.

"Surely, Mr. Manson," she remonstrated, "you do not think these rooms worth two dollars a week. It is all we are able to do to raise the rent we now pay."

"Humph!" muttered Peter, avoiding the eye of his tenant, "they are worth all I can get for them."

"Have you raised the rent on the other rooms in this house?"

"No, but I—I shall soon."

"Then I tremble for your tenants. Mr. Manson, if you were poor yourself, perhaps you would have a heart to sympathize with and pity the poor."

"If I were poor!" exclaimed the old man, betrayed into his customary whine; "I am poor; indeed, I am very poor."

"You!" repeated Mrs. Codman incredulously. "Why, you must receive a thousand dollars a year from this building."

"Yet I—I am poor," persisted Peter. "I am only an agent. I—I do not own the building; at least—I mean—there are heavy incumbrances on it. I have to pay away nearly every dollar I receive."

"Can you let me remain a month longer for the same rent as heretofore?" asked Mrs. Codman anxiously.

"I—I couldn't do it," said Peter hastily. "Either you must pay two dollars a week, or move out."

Mrs. Codman hesitated.

She went to the bureau, and found that she had between five and six dollars remaining in her purse. This would enable her, in addition to what she could earn by sewing, to get along for a month.

"Very well, sir," said she. "I must stay a month longer, at any rate. I must for my boy's sake."

"Have you a son?" asked Peter, desirous of learning from the mother's lips that the blow had struck home.

"Yes; you have probably seen him here sometimes."

"I haven't noticed him."

"I am feeling very anxious about him. Yesterday morning he went out on an errand for some one who had engaged him, and he hasn't been back since. I am afraid something must have happened to him," and the mother's eyes filled with tears.

"Perhaps he has fallen off from one of the wharves, and got drowned," suggested Peter, with a savage delight in the pain he was inflicting.

"You don't think it possible!" exclaimed Mrs. Codman, starting to her feet, and looking in the old man's face, with a glance of agonized entreaty, as if he could change by his words the fate of her son.

"Such things often happen," said Peter, chuckling inwardly at the success of his remark; "I knew a boy—an Irish boy, about the size of yours—drowned the other day."

"About the size of my boy! I thought you had not noticed him."

"I—I remember having seen him once," stammered Peter. "He is about a dozen years old, isn't he?"

"Yes; but you don't—you can't think him drowned."

"How should I know?" muttered Peter. "Boys are careless, very careless, you know that; and like as not he might have been playing on the wharf, and——"

"No, it can't be," said Mrs. Codman, with a feeling of relief which her knowledge of Charlie's habits gave her.

"Charlie was not careless, and never went to play on the wharf."

The old man was disappointed to find that his blow had failed of its effect, but ingenious in devising new methods of torture, he now suggested the true cause of Charlie's absence.

"Perhaps," he said, with his cruel gray eyes fixed upon the mother, "perhaps he's been carried off in a ship."

"Carried off in a ship!" faltered Mrs. Codman.

"Yes," said Peter, delighted by the evident dismay with which this suggestion was received.

"But," said Mrs. Codman, not quite comprehending his meaning, "Charlie never had any inclination to go to sea."

"Perhaps they didn't consult him about it," suggested Peter.

"*What do you mean?*" exclaimed the mother, with startling emphasis, half-advancing toward the old man.

"You—you shouldn't be so violent," said Peter, trembling and starting back in alarm.

"Violent! Deprive a mother of her only child, and she may well show some vehemence."

"I—I didn't do it," said Peter hastily.

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Codman, wondering at his thinking it necessary to exculpate himself; "but you were saying something about—about boys being carried to sea against their will."

"I didn't mean anything," muttered Peter, regretting that he had put her on the right track.

"But you did, otherwise you would not have said it. For Heaven's sake, tell me what you did mean, and all you meant. Don't fear to distress me. I can bear anything except this utter uncertainty."

She looked up earnestly into the old man's face.

Peter was somewhat amused at the idea that he might be afraid to distress her, but decided, on reflection, to tell her all that he chose she should be made acquainted with.

"Sometimes," he explained, "a captain is short of hands, and fills out his number the best way he can. Now, perhaps one of the ships at the wharves might have wanted a boy, and the captain might have invited your son on board, and, ha, ha! it almost makes me laugh to think of it, might have carried him off before he thought where he was."

"Do you laugh at the thought of such a cruel misfortune?" asked Mrs. Codman, startled from her grief by the old man's chuckle.

"I—excuse me, I didn't intend to; but I thought he would be so much surprised when he found out where he was."

"And does that seem to you a fitting subject for merriment?" demanded the outraged mother.

The miser cowed beneath her indignant glance, and, muttering something unintelligible, slunk away.

"Curse her!" he muttered, in his quavering tones, "why can't I face her like a man? I never could. That was

the way when—when she rejected me. But I shall have my revenge yet."

Strange to say, Peter's last suggestion produced an effect quite different from that which he anticipated and intended. Days passed, and Charlie did not come; but his mother feeling certain, she hardly knew why, that he had been inveigled on board some vessel, felt sure he would some day return.

"He will write to me as soon as he gets a chance," thought the mother, "and I shall soon see him again,"

CHAPTER XIII.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

Small as was the remuneration which Mrs. Codman received for sewing, she hoped, by great economy, to get along with the money which she already had on hand. But troubles never come singly, and of this she was destined to feel the full significance.

One morning she made up a bundle of completed work, and proceeded with it to the ready-made clothing-store of Messrs. Sharp & Keene, her employers. It was a trial to one reared as Mrs. Codman had been to come into contact with men who did not think it necessary to hide their native coarseness from one who made shirts for them at twenty cents apiece.

On the present occasion she was kept waiting for some time, before her presence appeared to be noticed. At length, Sharp nodded to her from the desk.

"Ahem! Mrs. Wiggins," commenced Sharp.

"Codman, sir," corrected the one addressed.

"Well, the name don't signify, I suppose. How many shirts have you got there?"

"Half a dozen, sir."

"Half a dozen at twenty cents apiece make a dollar and

twenty cents. Present this card at the other desk and you will be paid."

He scratched on a card "6 shirts—$1.20," and handed it to her, at the same time calling, in a loud voice, "Here, Thomas, pay Mrs. Wigman a dollar and twenty cents."

"Codman, sir."

"It seems to me you are mighty particular about your name."

"Shall I have more work?" asked Mrs. Codman, with some anxiety.

"Well, not at present. Business is dull just now. Nothing doing, and won't be for some time to come."

"How long before you can probably give me something to do?" inquired Mrs. Codman apprehensively.

"Can't say," was the careless reply. "It may be a month, or six weeks. You can call round in four or five weeks."

"What am I to do between now and then?" thought the poor woman, with her heart sinking.

She must get something to do. She could not live otherwise, more especially since the rise in the rent, and her resources had been so largely diminished by the withdrawal of Charlie's services.

She applied at several other shops which she passed on the way home, but found, in every case, that they were already overrun with applications, and in the slack of business would be compelled to discharge some of those at present employed.

But the hour is darkest that's just before day, and when fortune has done its worst, oftentimes the tide turns, and affairs improve.

So it proved with Mrs. Codman.

On reaching home, not a little depressed at the idea of remaining inactive, when she stood so much in need of the proceeds of her labor, Mrs. Codman had scarcely removed her bonnet and shawl, when she heard a knock at her door.

In answer to her "Come in," the door opened and the washerwoman, who roomed just above, entered.

"How do you do, Mrs. O'Grady?" said Mrs. Codman.

"I am very well, Mrs. Codman, and I hope it's the same wid yerself. Have you heard anything of the swate boy that was lost?"

"Nothing," was the sad reply.

"Cheer up, then, Mrs. Codman. He'll be coming back bimeby, wid his pockets full of gold, so that you won't have to work any more."

"I am afraid that I shall not be able to work any more at present," returned Mrs. Codman.

"And what for not? Is it sick that ye are?"

Mrs. Codman related the want of success which she had met with in procuring work. She also mentioned Peter's visit and the increased rent.

"Just like him, the old spalpeen!" broke out Mrs. O'Grady indignantly. "He wants to squeeze the last cint out of us poor folks, and it don't do him any good neither.

I'd be ashamed if Mr. O'Grady wint about dressed as he does. But maybe, Mrs. Codman, I'll get you a chance that'll take you out of his reach, the mane ould rascal!"

"You get me a chance! What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Codman, turning with surprise to her Hibernian friend and defender.

"I'll tell ye, only jist sit down, for it may take me some time."

It seems that Mrs. O'Grady had been employed, at sundry times, in the house of a Mr. Bowman, a wealthy merchant living on Mt. Vernon street. This gentleman had lost his wife some months before, and had an only child, a daughter, about ten years of age. Her father did not like schools, either public or private, for a child of her years, and preferred that his daughter, for the present, should be educated at home. Hitherto she had been left pretty much to herself, and had never been willing to apply herself to study.

Mr. Bowman was now looking for a suitable governess for his daughter, and it had struck Mrs. O'Grady—who, though ignorant and uncultivated herself, was sharp-sighted enough to detect the marks of education and refinement in another—that Mrs. Codman would suit him.

So Mrs. O'Grady, in her zeal, made bold to intimate to the servants, through whom it reached Mr. Bowman, that she knew a sweet lady who would be just the one for a governess for the young lady.

Now the recommendation of an Irish washerwoman

may not be considered the most valuable in an affair of this kind; but it so happened that the suggestion reached Mr. Bowman at a time when he was so oppressed with business cares that he did not know how to spare the time necessary to seek out a governess. He accordingly summoned Mrs. O'Grady to a conference and asked some hasty questions of her, which she answered by such eulogistic account of Mrs. Codman, whose condescending kindness had quite won her heart, that Mr. Bowman desired her to request Mrs. Codman to call upon him the next day at a stated hour.

"So you see, Mrs. Codman," concluded the warmhearted Irishwoman, "that you're in luck, and all you've got to do is to call upon Mr. Bowman to-morrow, and you'll get a nice home, and won't have to work any more at your sewing."

Mrs. Codman did not at once reply.

"And won't you go?" asked Mrs. O'Grady, wondering at her silence.

"I think I will," said Mrs. Codman, "and I feel much obliged to you, my good friend, for saying a kind word for me, though I do not feel at all confident that I shall obtain this place."

"Niver fear for that," said the sanguine washerwoman; "he'll see at once that you're a rale lady, and it's in luck he'll be to get you."

Undoubtedly, the position of a governess would be more remunerative, and less laborious, than that of a seamstress,

and, under present circumstances, Mrs. Codman felt that she could not afford to throw the chance away. She retired that night a little more cheerful and hopeful than would have been the case had not this door of escape from the evil of want been shown her.

CHAPTER XIV.

BERTHA BOWMAN.

In the breakfast-room of a house on Mt. Vernon Street sat a gentleman of perhaps forty-five, rather stout, and with a pleasant expression of countenance. He had finished his cup of coffee, and taken up the morning paper, which he scanned carefully, more especially those parts relating to business.

At the opposite side of the table sat a young lady of ten, with mirthful black eyes, and very red cheeks, which are well set off by her black hair. Altogether, she was very handsome, a fact of which she was not altogether unconscious. She was lively, fresh, original, and impulsive, not under very much restraint, but with an excellent disposition and kindly feelings, which did not allow her to go very far wrong. Yet it must be confessed that thus far her education had been sadly neglected, so that she probably knew less than most girls two years younger.

The room in which the father and daughter were seated was tastefully furnished with that regard to comfort which is found in American houses.

The two are Benjamin Bowman, a wealthy merchant, and his daughter Bertha, though, in that shortening of

name which is apt to take place in a family, hers had been shortened to Bert, which she appeared to prefer to the longer and more strictly feminine name.

"Papa," she said, pushing away her plate, "you ain't good company at all."

"Thank you for the compliment, Bert," he said.

"But you're not, though. There you are wearing out your eyes over that stupid paper, and leaving me to talk to myself or Topsy. Here, Topsy, isn't it so?"

At this summons a kitten, black as the ace of spades, and very much addicted to fun and frolic, jumped into the lap of her young mistress, and purred a noisy acquiescence.

"There," said Bert triumphantly, "Topsy says I am right. I don't know what I should do without Topsy."

"She makes a very suitable companion for you, Bert," said Mr. Bowman, smiling.

"Why?" asked the cat's mistress suspiciously.

"Because you can sympathize so well. Both are equally mischievous, and it is very difficult to tell which knows the most of books."

"Now you are laughing at me, papa. I know you are."

"Not entirely, Bert. The fact is, you are terribly ignorant for one of your age."

"I suppose I am," said Bert, shaking her head in comic despair.

"You'll grow up with no more knowledge than a Hottentot."

"Don't they have any schools among the Hottentots?"

"I suppose not."

"How delightful that must be! Why can't we move out where they live?"

"I don't know but we shall have to," said her father, "as, hereabouts, young ladies are expected to know something about books. But that reminds me I don't know but I shall succeed in engaging a governess for you to-day."

"A governess to-day!" exclaimed Bert in dismay.

"Yes. I have made an appointment with a lady to call here at nine o'clock, and, if I am satisfied with her, I intend to engage her."

"And if *I* am satisfied with her," added Bert.

"Is that essential?" asked her father, smiling.

"Yes, for you know she will be with me most of the time. If she is like Julia Campbell's governess, I sha'n't like her."

"Well, and what fault do you find with Julia Campbell's governess?" asked Mr. Bowman, with more interest than his tone conveyed; for he knew that if Bert did not fancy her governess she would be a most incorrigible little rebel, and would be likely to profit very little by her instructions.

"Oh, she's as disagreeable as she can be. In the first place, she's an old maid—not that that's so *very* bad. In fact, I've about made up my mind to be an old maid myself."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Bowman, amused. "May I inquire your reasons?"

"Too numerous to mention."

"Perhaps one is, that you don't expect to have any chance to change your name."

"I've had a chance already," said Bert, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Had a chance already!" exclaimed her father, in amazement.

"Yes," said the young lady of ten, "Charlie Morrill offered himself the other day, and I refused him."

"What is the world coming to?" thought Mr. Bowman. "Why did you refuse him?"

"Because," said Bert soberly, "I don't like the way he parts his hair. But as for Julia's governess, I know she never had an offer. She's as homely as—as—well, I don't know who. Then she wears glasses, and has a nose ever so long, and a long face, and she never smiles, and she makes Julia study terrible hard."

And Bert drew a long breath.

"Not a very charming picture, certainly," said Mr. Bowman: "but I'll promise you that, if the lady who applies for the post of governess to-day should be anything like this, I won't engage her."

"That's right, papa. When do you expect her?"

"Let me see. She was to be here at nine, and now it wants only ten minutes of that time."

"And you won't send me out of the room, papa, will you?"

Mr. Bowman hesitated.

"You know I am very anxious to see how she looks. If I like her, I will make a sign to you, and then you can engage her."

"What sign will you make, Bert?" asked her father, amused, and yet alive to the necessity of securing his daughter's acquiescence in his choice.

"I don't know," said Bert, reflecting; "suppose I wink?"

"And suppose the lady should see you winking at me? What do you suppose she would think?"

"Oh, I could tell her afterward, you know, and she would feel flattered, knowing it was a sign I liked her.

"She might not think it very ladylike in you."

"What's the use of being ladylike? I don't want to be. There's Florence Gates; I suppose she's ladylike. I'll show you how she walks."

Bert imitated the gait of the young lady, swaying herself from side to side, as she walked with mincing step, tossing her head, and exhibiting a caricature of the airs and affectations which girls sometimes delight to display.

"Why, she wouldn't run for a thousand dollars," exclaimed Bert. "She would think it beneath her dignity. If *she* is ladylike, I don't want to be. But, hark! there goes the bell. She's coming. Now, papa, just remember, I shall wink if I like her, and if I don't I'll make up a face."

Bert transferred herself to an ottoman, and took Topsy into her lap.

Both she and her father looked toward the door with curiosity.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. CODMAN'S GOOD FORTUNE.

Mrs. Codman had been carefully educated and was versed in all the accomplishments which are considered indispensable in a young lady's education. It was with no degree of hesitation on this point, therefore, that she set out this particular morning to present herself as an applicant for the post of governess. Having no influential friends, however, and not being able to present references from a former employer—this being her first essay in this line—she feared that her application would be unsuccessful. She could not but feel a considerable degree of anxiety, for her circumstances had become desperate, owing to the refusal of her former employers to give her any more sewing.

She dressed herself as neatly as her limited wardrobe would permit, and with hearty good wishes and many glowing predictions of success from her humble friend, Mrs. O'Grady, she set out.

Though some years past thirty, Mrs. Codman so far retained the freshness of youth that she would hardly have been taken for this age. As a girl she had been very beautiful, and her womanhood did not belie her early promise.

Her attire, though not expensive, was in good taste and characterized by a ladylike simplicity.

Such was the applicant for the post of governess, upon whom the curious eyes of Bert and her father fell as she was ushered into the breakfast-room by the servant, who had received orders to do so. She entered the room with the easy grace of a lady. Mr. Bowman at once recognized her claim to be considered such by deferentially rising and inviting her to be seated.

"If I mistake not," he said politely, "you are the lady who has been recommended to me as possessing excellent qualifications for the office of governess."

"Perhaps the recommendation was too strong and decided," said Mrs. Codman modestly. "I shall be glad, however, to be considered an applicant for the position."

Here Mr. Bowman, who chanced to glance at Bert, detected her executing a surprising succession of winks, indicating the favorable impression which had been made upon her by the appearance of Mrs. Codman.

Already prepossessed in favor of the applicant, this was an additional inducement to engage her, as her success would depend, to a very great extent, upon the young lady's good-will.

"I suppose," he said, "you feel prepared to teach the accomplishments usually included in the education of a young lady?"

Mrs. Codman bowed.

"I ain't a young lady," interrupted Bert, at this point,

who thought she was in imminent danger of becoming too learned.

"We hope you will be some time," said Mr. Bowman.

In reply, Bert winked once more.

There was a piano in the room.

"Will you favor us with a specimen of your playing?" asked Mr. Bowman.

Mrs. Codman sat down at the piano and played two pieces, one slow in movement, the other rapid, showing a nice touch and easy execution.

"Thank you," said Mr. Bowman. "I am inclined to think that I shall be glad to avail myself of your services. Should you be willing to engage for three months at first, to see how we are mutually pleased with each other? The pupil I have to offer you is a little addicted to mischief, and I don't know how you may like her."

"I am quite willing to enter into such an arrangement," said Mrs. Codman; "and in reference to the last point, I am quite sure I shall like my pupil. I begin to like her already."

"Do you?" said Bert, with much satisfaction, rising from the ottoman, and unceremoniously dropping the black kitten, who turned a somerset and ran off shaking her head.

In answer, Mrs. Codman held out her hand with a smile.

Bert hurried across the room, and placed her own in it confidingly.

"I am glad you do," said she. "You won't make me study my eyes out, will you?"

"That would, indeed, be a pity," said Mrs. Codman, looking at Bert's bright eyes, sparkling with fun and mischief.

Mr. Bowman observed these signs of agreement between Bert and her new governess with pleasure, and hastened to say: "In regard to business arrangements we will speak by and by. I think I can promise that they will be satisfactory to you."

It may be mentioned here that Mr. Bowman, who was by no means disposed to deal parsimoniously with those in his employ, fixed Mrs. Codman's salary at six hundred dollars a year, which was four times as much as she had ever been able to gain by her needle.

"When may we expect you?" he asked. "You have, doubtless, some preliminary arrangements to make, for which you will please take whatever time you may require. Meanwhile, accept this sum in advance."

He drew from his pocketbook a fifty-dollar note, which he handed to Mrs. Codman. She could not feel any embarrassment in accepting a sum so tendered, and, bowing her thanks, intimated that she would make her appearance on the following Monday, it being then Thursday.

The advance payment proved very acceptable to Mrs. Codman, as with it she was enabled to replenish her wardrobe, a step rendered necessary by her residence in Mr. Bowman's family. She was busily engaged for the remainder of the week in supplying its deficiencies.

No one could be more overjoyed than was the humble washerwoman at the success of her friend, of which she felt sure from the first, knowing Mrs. Codman to be a "rale" lady. The latter, feeling that she owed her present good fortune mainly to the zealous recommendation of her friendly neighbor, purchased a neat dress, which Mrs. O'Grady was prevailed upon to accept, on being convinced she would not thereby be distressing herself, a fact of which she was assured on being told of Mr. Bowman's liberality.

Yet there was one thought which contributed to diminish the joy which Mrs. Codman would otherwise have felt at being restored, in a measure, to the mode of life to which she had been accustomed, and relieved from the necessity of unremitting labor in order to sustain life. This was the thought of Charlie, her own brave, handsome boy, who had been the joy and life of her little household, now gone—she knew not whither.

She was sustained, however, by a strong confidence that he was yet living, and had little doubt that the suggestion of Peter Manson was correct, that he had been carried off by the captain of some vessel short of hands. Of course, she did not for an instant harbor the suspicion that Peter himself had had anything to do with his disappearance, being quite unaware that any motive existed powerful enough to tempt the old man to such a crime.

"I shall hear from him! I shall see him again," she thought, with earnest conviction. "He is under the eye of

Providence, wherever he may be, and no harm shall befall him."

Still, even with this strong feeling of trust, there was an uncertainty about the time when her wishes could be realized, which could not fail to weigh upon the mother's heart. Then there was the constant longing for his bright and enlivening presence, greater, because he was her only child, and she was a widow.

The furniture which Mrs. Codman had in her rooms she was enabled to dispose of without a very great sacrifice. She reserved a few articles, endeared to her by association, which she stored in the room of her friendly neighbor.

With her, also, she left a sum of money sufficient to pay for her month's rent, which would not be due for a fortnight after her removal to the house of Mr. Bowman. Peter Manson was not a litle surprised and disappointed when, on visiting his tenant—prepared to witness her distress and hear entreaties for a reduction of her rent—to find her already gone, and to hear that she had obtained an advantageous situation, though where he was unable to ascertain, as Mrs. O'Grady, with whom he was no favorite, was not disposed to be communicative.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHARLIE CODMAN'S SEA-LIFE.

When the *Bouncing Betsy* was fairly out to sea, Captain Brace, anticipating with the malicious delight which a petty tyrant feels in the sufferings of those subject to him, the grief and terror of his cabin-boy, ordered Charlie to be released from his bonds and brought before him. This order the mate chose to execute in person.

The pressure of the cords, with which the boy had been bound, had chafed his limbs, and the constraint of his position had made them ache.

As the mate busied himself in unbinding him, Charlie inquired, with a glimmering of hope:

"Are you going to let me go?"

"Where?" asked Randall.

"On shore."

"Perhaps you don't know that, by this time, we are at least forty miles from Boston."

"Could you send me back?" asked Charlie, his heart sinking within him.

"I suppose we might turn the ship about, and go back for your accommodation," said the mate, with a sneer; "but I don't think Captain Brace would consent."

"Is there no way?" implored Charlie. "Couldn't you put me on board some ship going back?"

"You can speak to the captain about that. He has sent for you. Come along, and don't be all day about it."

Charlie stretched himself with the intent of gaining some relief from the confinement he had suffered, and prepared to do what he knew there was no means of evading. Then he followed Randall to the presence of Captain Brace.

"Well, Jack," said Captain Brace, showing his teeth in an unpleasant manner, "how do you like life on shipboard?"

"My name is not Jack," was the boy's reply.

"Indeed! Perhaps you will do me the favor to tell me what it is."

"My name is Charlie Codman."

"So you pretend to be wiser than your uncle," said Captain Brace, looking toward the mate.

"He is not my uncle," said Charlie boldly. If he had felt it to be prudent, he would have added that he had no desire for a relationship to Randall, but he knew that it would not be wise.

"Do you dare to contradict my first officer?" demanded the captain, with a frown.

"I am only telling the truth," said Charlie undauntedly.

"*Silence!*" roared the captain, in passion. "If he chooses to call you his nephew, you shall be so; do you hear that? I say do you hear that?" he repeated, pounding with his clenched fist upon the table before him.

"Yes, sir."

"Take care that you remember it then. Your name, henceforth, is Jack Randall—at any rate, as long as you remain aboard this ship."

"How long am I to remain on board, sir?" Charlie could not help asking.

"How long?" repeated the captain. "*Forever,* if I choose. And now as this is the last conversation which I intend to hold with you on this point, you will bear in mind that you are shipped on board this vessel as a boy, and that, if you don't do your duty, you'll get all that's coming to you."

This was rather a hard trial for Charlie, accustomed to a mother's gentle and affectionate words. Had he been less manly, he would have burst into tears; but he only turned pale a little, and bit his lips.

"Take him on deck, Mr. Randall, and set him to work," said the captain; "and mind, Jack, that I don't hear any complaints of you."

Charlie followed the mate to the deck. He had made up his mind that he must stay in the ship during the voyage, or, at all events, until they reached land somewhere, and resolved that, since it was forced upon him, he would do his duty as well as he could, and so afford as little advantage as possible to those who seemed determined to persecute him.

He was set to work by Randall, who told him, in a

sharp tone, to "mind his eye, and keep to work, it he knew what was best for himself."

The work was not difficult, but Charlie's fingers were unpracticed, and he might very soon have incurred the wrath of the captain and mate if Bill Sturdy had not approached him, the mate being temporarily out of earshot, and given him a little instruction.

"Well, my lad, what news?" inquired Bill. "Shipped for the voyage, are you?"

"That's what the captain and mate say," returned Charlie.

"They're a pair of precious rascals," said Bill, lowering his voice, "and it's my opinion they're well matched, so far as villainy goes."

"What made you ship on board the vessel?" inquired Charlie.

"Bless your soul, boy, I wouldn't 'a' done it if I'd known who was in command; leastways, if I had known a little more about him. But I didn't ask any questions. I had just got in from a v'y'ge to Calcutta, and happened to see one of my old shipmates, Jim Davis, walking on the wharf. 'Bill,' says he, 'why won't you ship along of me?' I asked him where he was bound, and he telled me to Valparaiso, on board the *Bouncing Betsy*.

"Well, I've been most everywhere else, but I had never been there, and reckoned I should like to see it. Besides, I got tired of going to Calcutta. I've been there, man and boy, six or eight times. It's too hot to live there

some parts of the year. So I just told him I was in for it if he was, provided there was a vacancy. I asked him if he knew anything about the officers. He said he didn't, but he guessed they would pass. So I just stepped into the office and shipped. There, lad, that's the whole story. I don't mind it much myself. They don't generally meddle much with me."

"Have you sailed with bad captains before?" inquired our hero.

"Yes, my lad, sometimes. One captain I sailed with—I was a young man then—was Captain Maguire. He was a sort of an Irishman, I surmise, and mighty fond of drink. He was pleasant enough when he was sober, but that wasn't often. When he was drunk, he got into a regular fury. He would tear around the deck like as if he was crazy, and so he was after a fashion, for he didn't seem to know, after he had got out of his fits, what he had done when he was in 'em. One day, I remember, as I was at work, he came up to me, and gave me a terrible thwack side of the head, swearing like a trooper all the time."

"What did you do?" asked Charlie, looking up with interest into the weatherbeaten face of the old sailor.

"I'll tell you," said Sturdy; "you see I'm pretty strong," glancing at his brawny arms and Herculean frame with pardonable complacency. "I don't often meet a man I can't manage as easily as the mate can manage you. Now the captain wasn't a large man, by any means, nor very

strong, either. As to the mates, one of them was sick in his berth, and the other was in another part of the ship; so I just took the captain up in my arms, and carried him down to the cabin, kickin' and cursin', as might be expected, and laid him down there. The officers didn't see what was goin' on, or there'd have been trouble. As for the crew, they enjoyed it all, and wouldn't a man of 'em tell; and as the captain didn't remember anything about it the next day, I didn't get punished."

"Did you ever get punished?" asked Charlie.

"Never since I grew up, and had these to fight my way with," said Bill Sturdy, showing his fists, which looked as if a blow from either of them would have killed an ox. "No, my lad, these are what I call my sledge-hammers, and I'd as soon have them to rely upon as a pair of pistols."

At this point in the conversation Bill was called off to some other part of the vessel, and the mate coming up discovered, somewhat to his disappointment, that Charlie had discharged his task in a manner which did not admit of censure.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RIVAL CHAMPIONS.

It is customary to divide a ship's crew into two watches, whose duty it is to alternate in keeping a lookout at night. The first night-watch commences at eight o'clock and continues till midnight. This watch is then relieved by the second, who have had an opportunity of sleeping in the meantime, and who remain on duty till four a. m. They then give place to the first, who are again on duty till eight in the morning. Thus it will be seen that a part of the crew have eight hours to sleep, while the remainder have but four. This inequality, however, is remedied the next evening, when the hours are changed.

Charlie was fortunate in one respect. He was placed in the same watch with Bill Sturdy, who had established himself, in some sort, as the boy's protector, and did not scruple to avow it. When some of the crew began to tease and play rough practical jokes upon Charlie—a mode of treatment to which boys are frequently subjected on board ship—Bill Sturdy interfered, and in a sonorous voice exclaimed:

"Look here, shipmates, don't lay a finger on this boy!"

"And why not?" inquired a burly sailor, with naturally repulsive features.

"Because I say so," retorted Bill Sturdy.

"Who is he, I should like to know, that we are to keep our distance?"

"I'll tell you who he is, shipmates," was the answer. "He's a boy that the mate has entrapped on board without his own consent."

"Isn't he the mate's nephew?"

"No more than I am, though the mate chooses to call him so. He's got a mother living in Boston, and he's her only boy. She doesn't know what has become of him. Now, shipmates, he seems to be a fine lad, and I'm going to stand by him for his sake and his mother's."

Sailors are generous when you reach their hearts, and there was a murmur of approbation when Bill concluded.

But there is no rule without an exception, and that exception was Antonio, the scowling sailor who has already been mentioned. Few knew much about him. This was his second voyage on board the *Bouncing Betsy*. Next to Bill Sturdy, he was the stoutest and most athletic sailor on board the ship. During the previous voyage he had been the bully of the crew, taking advantage of his physical strength. Now they were released from his tyranny. In Bill Sturdy he had more than found his match. No one, comparing the two men, could doubt that in a contest the odds would be decidedly in favor of Bill.

Antonio, who was a Spaniard by birth, could not help

seeing the changed state of affairs. Now, no one likes to be eclipsed, and to see the authority passing from his hands, into those of another. Certainly Antonio did not behold this transfer with indifference. He could not brook holding the second place, where the first had been his. But how could he help it? Very evidently the opinions of the crew favored Bill Sturdy; not only because they believed him to excel Antonio in physical qualities, which hold a high value in the eyes of a sailor, but because he had, as yet, shown no disposition to abuse his power.

Antonio was resolved not to yield without a struggle, and therefore determined to take the first occasion to pick a quarrel with his rival, as this would give him an opportunity to measure his strength with him. Antonio did not see, what was evident to others, that his rival was undeniably his superior in prowess. People are generally slow to admit their own inferiority. That is only natural. He hoped, therefore, that he should be able to reestablish his supremacy by coming off a conqueror in the contest which he had determined to do all in his power to bring about.

Antonio's attention had not been especially called to Charlie, until he heard Bill Sturdy avow his determination to take him under his protection. Then, in a spirit of perverseness, and because he thought it would open the way for the trial of strength which he courted, he resolved to oppose him, and openly espouse the other side.

Accordingly, when the murmurs of applause, which had been elicited by his rival's frank and generous appeal to the sympathies of the crew, had subsided, Antonio looked round on the rough faces which surrounded him, and growled:

"Well, shipmates, are you going to submit to what this fellow says? He dares you to touch this sniveling milk-sop of a boy."

Some of the faces grew dark and threatening at this representation. Nothing stirs up a sailor's heart to opposition so readily as anything which resembles a threat.

Bill Sturdy hastened to reply.

"He is wrong. I don't threaten any of you. I only ask if it is right to play tricks, and abuse a boy who has already been treated so scurvily by the mate. I don't believe there's any one of you that wants to curry favor with Mr. Randall and the captain. Now there is nothing they will like better than to see you kicking round this lad."

Neither the captain nor the mate stood very high in the good graces of the crew, and the effect produced by this statement showed that it was adroitly conceived.

Bill Sturdy took advantage of this to add, "Now, lads, when I say I am going to stand by this boy, and see that he isn't abused, I know you'll stand by me."

This frank and bold speech produced a decided reaction in favor of Charlie.

There was another murmur of approbation, which was

interrupted by a stamp upon the deck by Antonio, who, with a ferocious contortion of countenance shouted:

"If you're all going to follow this man's lead, and do like dogs whatever he bids you, you'll find there's one here that dares to be independent."

Saying this, he advanced suddenly to Charlie, who was at work near-by, and, seizing him by the shoulder, was about to proceed to some act of violence.

As soon as Bill Sturdy perceived his design, he sprang forward and gave him a powerful blow which would have felled him to the deck, had not Bill slipped a little as he delivered it.

Instantly the Spaniard's sallow face was suffused, and, with a torrent of oaths and a howl of fury, he precipitated himself upon Sturdy.

But it was easier to catch a weasel asleep, than to take the stout sailor unprepared.

With his feet firmly planted upon the deck, and his fists in a proper position, he received the bully, parrying his blows with wonderful dexterity, and succeeding in planting others no less effective.

A ring of sailors gathered around, eager to watch the progress and termination of the affray. There were not a few among them who enjoyed the punishment which they foresaw the Spaniard would receive from his antagonist. He had so tyrannized over them in the past that they felt little sympathy for him now.

Baffled, blinded, and howling with mingled rage and

vexation, the Spaniard continued the unequal fight. As for Bill Sturdy, he was cool and collected, apparently neither angry nor excited, but wary and on the alert.

At length Antonio, perceiving a marlin-spike at a little distance, sprang toward it. It was a critical moment for Bill Sturdy, for a marlin-spike, in the hands of a furious and determined man, is a formidable weapon.

His movement did not escape the notice of Sturdy, who had acted principally on the defensive thus far, but he now saw that something decisive must be done.

Springing forward, he closed with his assailant, lifted him from the deck, and, carrying him to the companion-way, hurled him down-stairs.

Then, turning to the crew, he exclaimed:

"Shipmates, I call you to witness that this quarrel was forced upon me. Have I done right or wrong?"

"Right!" exclaimed all, in concert.

At this moment the mate, attracted by the noise came on deck.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANTONIO'S RESOLVE.

"What has been going on?" asked Randall, perceiving, from the position of the sailors and their looks, that something had happened. What it was he surmised, having heard something of the noise of the conflict.

No one of the sailors spoke, but all looked at each other in hesitating silence.

"What was it? Are you all deaf?" demanded the mate impatiently.

"A little fight, that is all, Mr. Randall," answered Bill Sturdy, coolly hitching up his pants.

"And you were one of the parties?"

"I believe I was."

"And who was the other?"

"Antonio."

"And where is he now?"

"He has gone below," said Bill in a significant tone.

"What was the fight about?" inquired Randall, who in ordinary cases, would not have cared to pursue the subject further, but had an undefined idea that it was in some way connected with the boy, for whom he felt no peculiar affection.

"The fact is," said Bill Sturdy, "Antonio undertook to abuse that lad there," pointing to Charlie; "and I ain't one to stand by and see a boy abused. Besides," he added, with a latent humor which all understood, though he did not allow it to alter the gravity of his countenance, "I knew he was your nephew, and that made me the more anxious to defend him."

Randall was placed in an awkward predicament. He could not deny that Charlie was his nephew after his express declaration to that effect, while at the same time the relationship which he claimed was far from exciting, in his own mind, any attachment for the boy. Still it closed his mouth for the time. He only muttered, in an undertone, that the boy must fight his own battles, and disappeared from the deck.

'Fight his own battles!" repeated Sturdy indignantly. "A pretty sort of an uncle he is, to match a boy of fourteen against a grown man, and a strong one, at that. However," added Sturdy complacently, "the lad's got a friend that is a match for Antonio at any time."

"That he has," answered a comrade; "but I say, Bill, I couldn't help laughing to see how you made that old shark shut up his mouth by telling him it was his nephew you were fighting for. It made him mad, but he didn't know what to say against it."

"His nephew! No, Jack, it's well the lad isn't any kith or kin of his. A drop of his blood would be enough to spile a decent lad."

"Aye, that it would."

Presently Antonio came on deck with a sullen air, half defiance, half of humiliation, at his recent defeat. He smarted under the conviction, that henceforth his authority among the crew would be small. Hitherto he had been the champion and bully of the quarter-deck, and although the crew had no liking for him, but rather a decided feeling of an opposite nature, yet strength and prowess always command a certain rude respect among sailors, and that respect he enjoyed. But now all was changed. He had been beaten, and that in a fair fight, where all could see that no underhand means had been employed. Strength had been matched against strength, and he had come off second best. That had been a Waterloo day to him, and he knew that he returned to the deck no longer the same man so far as consideration went.

Bill Sturdy was a generous antagonist. He had no idea of indulging in exultation over his vanquished foe, but treated him as if nothing had happened.

But Antonio's resentment was deep and implacable. He thirsted for revenge, and determined to lull to sleep the suspicions of his late opponent, until some opportunity should present itself for an effectual and safe revenge.

According he suddenly recovered from his sullenness, and made some half-advances toward Sturdy, which the latter met, but not without reserve.

"I can't kind o' feel as if the feller was to be trusted," said Bill to Charlie one evening as they were alone to-

gether. "There's something in his eye that I don't like; a sort of deceitful gleam, as if there was something covered up that he didn't like to show. For my part, I like to be fair and aboveboard, and show just what I am.

"I'm sorry you have made an enemy of the man on my account," said Charlie.

"Avast, my lad, do you think I was going to stand still and let him abuse you? Thank Heaven, old Bill Sturdy, isn't such a lubber as that."

"But he may do you an injury yet, Bill."

"Let him come within the reach of my arm," said Bill, swinging his brawny right arm as he would a flail, "I guess he wouldn't want to try it again."

"But he may take you at advantage."

"He will have to get up early in the morning, then," said Sturdy, in a tone of confidence. "No lubberly foreigner is likely to get ahead of Bill Sturdy, I can tell you that, my lad."

Both Bill and Charlie supposed that they were alone, and that this conversation was unheard by any other person, but in this they were mistaken.

On the other side of the mast crouched the dark figure of a man, who seemed to be listening intently to the conversation between the two. He remained very quiet, fearing, doubtless, that he should be observed. Evidently what he heard did not affect him pleasantly. His brow contracted, and a scowl of hatred made his features look

even more dark and forbidding than was their wont, especially when Bill Sturdy made use of the last expression, his face exhibited a concentrated malice which could only have been generated in a heart full of evil passions.

He ground his white teeth together and muttered to himself, as he crept cautiously from his place of concealment, and made his way to his bunk in the forecastle.

"We shall see, we shall see. No man shall insult and triumph over me without repenting of it. He shall know, some time, what it is to excite the vengeance of a desperate man. He thinks the lion has become a lamb. He will find out his mistake."

Unconscious of the concealed listener to their discourse, Bill Sturdy and Charlie continued their conversation. In the hour of darkness, when night broods upon the ocean, and no sound is to be heard save the dashing of the waves against the sides of the vessel, the sailor who is obliged to stand his watch would find the hours pass wearily if it were not for some method of killing the time. Among these is the spinning of yarns, for which sailors are so noted. This it was that occurred to Bill, as he stood with Charlie leaning over the side.

"I say, my lad, suppose we spin a yarn apiece, and that will make the time pass quicker."

"But I am not an old sailor, Bill; I don't know anything about spinning yarns."

"Tush, lad, I don't expect a salt-water yarn from you. I want a land yarn. I am sure you have read a good many,

and can think of one now. Just lead off, and when you get through I'll try my hand at it."

Thus adjured, Charlie said: "Let me think a minute."

Bill leaned over the rail in silent expectation.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARLIE'S LAND YARN.

Charlie deliberated a moment, when he chanced to think of Nicholas Nickleby, the only one of Dickens' works he had ever read, and which, as it had interested him exceedingly, had impressed itself upon his remembrance.

"Did you ever hear of Nicholas Nickleby, Bill?" he inquired.

"Yes," was Bill's unexpected response; "when I was at Liverpool three years ago, she was lying alongside our ship."

"She!" exclaimed Charlie, in amazement.

"Yes," answered Sturdy, in a matter-of-fact tone; "she was a very good craft, and was in the West India trade. I saw considerable of her, being as how I got acquainted with Tom Seagrove, one of the men on board."

"Oh, yes, I see what you mean," said Charlie; "but I don't mean a ship, I mean a story of the same name."

"No, I never heard of it. Named after the ship, like enough."

Charlie thought it more probable that the vessel was named after the story, but as this was a point of little importance to the present occasion, he passed it by, and con-

tinued: "Well, Bill, it's a very interesting story, and as I remember that about as well as anything I ever read, I believe I will tell you a part of it."

"Heave ahead, my lad."

"You must know that this Nicholas Nickleby was a young man whose father died when he was about nineteen, leaving him very little money, but a mother and sisters to provide for. He had an old uncle, Ralph, who was very rich, but an old rascal, who didn't trouble himself about his poor relations."

"That's the way with a good many rich people," said Bill. "They leave the smaller craft to shift for themselves."

"However, on being applied to he did manage to get the sister a place in a millinery establishment, and, as for Nicholas, he got him a place as assistant teacher in a country boarding-school."

"He was a sort of first mate in the school, wasn't he?"

"Well, something like that, only he didn't fare half so well as a mate or any kind of an officer. All the old fellow gave him for his services was about twenty-five dollars a year and board."

"What made him ship on board the craft, then?"

"It was the only chance he had, so he thought he'd take it till he could find a better."

"What was the captain's name," asked Bill, who stuck to his marine phraseology.

"His name was Squeers, and a tough old fellow he was.

He had some thirty or forty boarding-scholars, whom he treated shamefully. In the first place, he didn't allow them enough to eat."

"Why didn't they mutiny, and pitch the lubber overboard?" exclaimed Bill indignantly.

"Because he had starved the spirit out of them. Besides, they were mostly small, and he had a wife as bad as himself, as well as a daughter who was——"

"A chip of the old block."

"Exactly. Do you want to know how he took away their appetites so that they wouldn't eat so much? He used to make them swallow a spoonful of boiling hot molasses, which scalded their throats, and made it hard for them to swallow."

"I'd like to have overhauled him," said Sturdy.

"If you had, I don't believe there'd have been much left of him, for he was a spindling sort of a man, tall and thin."

"And how did the young fellow like his place?"

"Not very much. He found they were going to half-starve him, too. However, he wouldn't have minded that so much as seeing the poor children abused. While all this was going on, the school-master's daughter fell in love with him."

"Was she pretty?"

"No," said Charlie. "She was the image of her father, and he wasn't anything of a beauty. She was thin, with a hatchet face and yellow hair. However, she continued to make herself think that Nicholas was in love with her,

and one day, when her father and mother were gone to London to get a new scholar, she posted off to a female friend of hers, and told her that she had got a beau, and invited her friend and her beau to come to tea. When tea-time came, there they all were in the sitting-room, drinking tea, and faring a great deal better than Nicholas had before since he had been at the school, when the other young lady and her beau began to poke fun at Nicholas, all on account of Matilda Squeers, whom they supposed him to be in love with. He didn't understand it at all, and told them so.

"'Why,' said John Brodie—that was the other girl's beau—'ain't you courtin' Tilda, here?' Nicholas protested that he never so much as thought of the thing. At this, Matilda turned all sorts of colors, for she had confidently told both of them that he was in love with her, and, besides, she had no idea that a poor, underpaid teacher would think of refusing her, the——"

"Captain's daughter," suggested Bill Sturdy.

"Exactly so. So you see the tea-party didn't end quite so pleasantly as it began, and from that moment Nicholas had a bitter enemy in the daughter of his employer."

"That's the way with female craft," said Bill. "What happened next?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Squeers came home, bringing the new boy with them. The first thing they did was to give a whipping all round, to make up for the time they'd been away."

"I wish I'd been there," said Bill, swinging his brawny arms.

"Among the scholars was one, worse treated than the rest, named Smike. He had been with them ever since he was a boy of six or eight, and his friends had deserted him. Mr. Somers would have cast him off, only he found his work more than paid for the scanty food he ate, so he kept him; but he was so beaten and cuffed, and made to drudge so constantly, that it would have been better for him if he had been turned away. At last he determined to run away."

"Good for him!" said Bill.

"As soon as Mr. Squeers found he was gone, he went after him post-haste, and, as the boy was weak and couldn't travel very fast, he soon overtook him, and brought him back, bound hand and foot, in the chaise. He suspected that Nicholas had helped Smike to escape, so he determined to inflict a cruel punishment upon him in the presence of his assistant. Accordingly, he armed himself with a large whip, and, calling all the school together, he told Smike to strip, and was just about to lay the whip on his naked back when Nicholas shouted out, 'Stop!' Squeers glared round, and said, in a fierce voice, 'Who said that?' 'I said it,' said Nicholas; 'I tell you, stop!' Squeers turned white with rage, and threatened to whip Nicholas, also. He was about to commence the punishment, when Nicholas sprang from his seat, and, pulling the whip from his hand, knocked Squeers over, and began to belabor him with his own whip."

"Good!" exclaimed Bill, who had become much interested in the narrative. "I hope he made him scream for mercy."

"So he did, and Nicholas kept on belaboring him, notwithstanding Mrs. Squeers and her daughter went at him tooth and nail, and tried to pull him off. But he was so excited with anger that he felt strong enough to cope with half a dozen, and never left off till Squeers was black and blue and aching all over."

"Hurrah for Nicholas!" shouted Bill Sturdy, in great delight at the schoolmaster's discomfiture. "What happened next?"

"Nicholas packed up his clothes and left the house, but took care to carry Smike with him, knowing that he would otherwise fare badly."

"And what became of Nicholas afterward? Did he reach port?"

"He met with a variety of adventures, but at length became rich and happy."

"That's a pretty good yarn," said Bill Sturdy. "I should have liked to help him whip the schoolmaster, though."

"Now, Bill, I am ready to hear your yarn," said Charlie.

CHAPTER XX.

BILL STURDY'S STORY.

After pausing a moment to collect his ideas, Bill Sturdy commenced his story.

"It was, mayhap, twelve years ago, or it might have been thirteen, since I sailed from New York in the ship *Peregrine,* bound for Havana," said Sturdy. "The *Peregrine* was quite a sizable ship, and I expected a pleasant voyage, as the captain was a frank, good-humored-looking man. So he was when he was in his sober senses; but, unfortunately, this wasn't always the case. However, he used to keep pretty straight when he was at home, for if he had shown himself out it might have been hard for him to get employment. If Jack gets drunk it's no serious damage to the ship, but if the chief officer, to whom all look for commands, allows himself to drink too much, especially when a storm threatens, it's a pretty bad matter. You see, my lad, that when a captain is drunk, he doesn't generally know it himself, and is apt to think that he is perfectly able to manage the ship.

"Well, Captain Harvey, for that was his name, was an excellent seaman, when he was sober. He was a thorough sailor, and knew every rope in the ship. But, as it hap-

pened, it would have been better if we had had a captain who knew less and kept sober.

"Captain Harvey kept pretty straight at first, as I was saying, and we men began to like him. He was a pleasant-spoken man, though he meant to be obeyed when he gave an order. I liked him all the better, because the captain I had gone with last was a different kind of man. It wasn't always a word and a blow with Captain Lafarge, but oftentimes the blow came first. Well, times seemed changed, and that was what I was saying to a messmate of mine, who had sailed with me under the other captain, when Captain Harvey came on deck. That was the third day out; his face looked unusually red, and his eyes blood-shot. He staggered up to us, gave me a blow side of the head as he said, or, rather, hiccuped, for he couldn't speak very plain: 'Wh—what are you—hic—doing there, you rascal?'

"Now, my lad, I'm not one to stand a blow very patiently; I'm rather apt to resent it, and so I should this time, but as I looked up I saw how matters stood, and that took away my anger. I liked Captain Harvey, and I knew that when he was right he would never think of giving me a blow without any cause, so I didn't do anything, but answered, as respectful as I could:

"'I hope I am doing my duty, Captain Harvey.'

"'You lie,' he stuttered again.

"I did not feel called upon to give any answer to this

charge. It was as well that I didn't, for he waited a minute and then left me.

"Well, this was the first that any of us knew of the captain's habits. We were all sorry, even those that liked to drink themselves, for this was the only fault we could detect in our chief officer, and it was a pretty serious one, as it turned out. I told you, didn't I, that we were bound for Havana?"

"Yes," said Charlie.

"Well, it sometimes happens that there are violent storms in those latitudes, and the coast is dangerous to approach. Time passed, and although Captain Harvey would have his blow-out now and then, yet there had been no particular damage so far, perhaps because we had had pretty quiet weather. Now, however, we had got into the region of gales, and we all hoped the captain would keep sober. But that wasn't to be.

"One morning, I remember, we had a powerful gale. The ship was behaving pretty well under it. She was a stanch craft, when we started, and bade fair to see a great many years' service. So, on the whole, we didn't feel uneasy till the captain came on deck. We saw at once that he was drunk, a good deal drunk, and not fit to take care of the ship. He staggered up to the mate, and asked him how fast the ship was going.

"The mate reported, ten knots an hour.

"'Ten knots an hour!' repeated the captain contemptuously. 'Is that all? We must go faster.'

"'But, Captain Harvey,' said the mate, 'there is a violent gale. Do you think it prudent to increase our speed?'

"'Prudent!' thundered the captain, 'do you think I would give the order if I didn't think so? Not a word more, but call all hands, and make sail.'

"Nothing was to be done but to obey. Accordingly the reefs were let out of the topsails, the topgallant-sails set, and even the foretopmast studding-sail. Now, my lad, although you are not much of a sailor, you can understand that it was perfect madness to carry so much sail in such a tempest. I knew at once what would happen, and prepared for the worst. There was a hencoop lying on deck, and I resolved that if the worst should come to the worst I would spring for that.

"The worst did come to the worst. The ship pitched about like a mad thing, and creaked and groaned as if she were a human being in the greatest distress, and I can tell you the sailors looked black enough. We felt that our lives were being risked, and all for the intemperance of one man. That scene cured me of drinking grog. I haven't drank a drop since."

"Did anything happen to the ship?"

"Yes, my lad, something did happen to the ship. A heavy sea struck her amidships, and pitched her over upon her side. After we recovered, we found that she was strained severely and leaking badly. Well, the end of it

was that we had to abandon her. The rest of the crew got into the boats, but there wasn't fairly room, and they were so overloaded that I thought I would be safer trusting to the old hencoop. They tried to get me into a boat, but I had a kind of suspicion that they wouldn't live. So I stuffed all my pockets with biscuit, filled a tin measure with water, and trusted myself to the hencoop."

"Did the boats live?" inquired Charlie, with interest.

"Not a single one. They were never heard from again. No doubt they all went down in the storm. Well, my lad, it wasn't the pleasantest thing pitching about on a hencoop on the wild sea, fifty miles, at least, from land. But my hope was that I should be seen by some vessel bound for Havana. In that case I knew I would be safe. I had provisions enough to last me three days, and I could make my water last as long by being sparing of it. I had to hold on to the hencoop pretty tight, or I should have been washed off by some of the heavy seas. Of course I got completely drenched by the salt water, and, what was worse, the biscuit got drenched, too, which didn't improve its taste, I can tell you.

"So I tossed about for twenty-four hours. By this time the gale had gone down, and the sea was more quiet. It was at this time that, casting my eyes about to see if I could anywhere catch sight of a sail, I descried one apparently making toward me."

"Weren't you delighted?"

"I was at first," said Bill, "but as she came nearer I tried not to attract her notice."

"Why?" asked Charlie, in great surprise.

"Because, my lad, *I recognized in her the Red Rover, one of the most noted pirates that cruised in those seas.*"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PIRATE SHIP.

"How did you know she was a pirate?" inquired Charlie.

"I suspected her in the first place from her rakish look. All pirate ships, you know, are made for speed. Besides, this particular ship had been described to me by a messmate who had once been on board a ship that was chased by her, though, luckily, before the pirate had a chance to overhaul her, two other vessels came in sight and frightened her away.

"As soon as I made out the approaching vessel to be the *Red Rover,* I repented bitterly the signs by which I had drawn her attention. I ceased making signals, but it was too late. She had already seen me, and a boat was filling with men to take me on board. Finding I could not well help myself, I concluded to make the best of it, and not show any objection to going with the boat's crew. So when they came near and hailed me, asking me who I was, I answered as heartily as I could, 'Bill Sturdy, of the good ship *Peregrine,* bound for Havana.'

"'And what's become of your ship?'

"'Gone to the bottom,' I answered.

"'How long since?'

" 'About twenty-four hours.'

" 'How did it happen?'

"In reply, I told all the circumstances, without reserve, for concealment would have done no good. There was a little consultation on board the boat, and then the officer in command brought it up alongside my hencoop, and ordered me aboard.

"This I did with as much alacrity as possible, and I tell you, my lad, it did seem good once more to be in a boat, even though it belonged to a pirate, after pitching about on a hencoop for twenty-four hours.

"Now that I had a chance, I looked at the men that manned the boat. They were villainous-looking cutthroats —mostly Spaniards, with dark, lowering faces and forbidding expressions. I couldn't help turning it over in my mind what they would be likely to do with me.

"It didn't take long to reach the pirate vessel. Those on board pressed forward, as I came up and got on deck. They were all pretty much alike. The captain was a large, stout, muscular man, though I believe," added Bill, with some complacency, "that I could have got the better of him in a regular rough-and-tumble fight. However, this isn't neither here nor there. He came up to me and made me answer over again the same questions which had been asked me before. I answered them in the same way. After he had got through with his questions, he fixed his sharp, black eyes on me, and inquired: 'Do you know the name of the ship that has picked you up?'

"'I do,' said I coolly, thought I didn't feel as cool as I appeared.

"'Ha!' he exclaimed, in surprise. 'What is it?'

"'It is the *Red Rover,*' said I, making believe to be unconcerned.

"'And are you acquainted with its character?' said the captain, with another of his sharp looks.

"'I believe so,' said I.

"'Name it.'

"'I think it is a pirate,' said I, not moving a muscle.

"'Ha!' he exclaimed, looking at me rather curiously. 'Are you not afraid to find yourself on board a pirate?'

"'Why should I be?' I answered. 'But for you I should have died on the hencoop, and I suppose, if you had meant to take away my life, you wouldn't have taken the trouble to save me, since death was certain.'

"'A bold fellow!' said the captain, aside, to the mate. He spoke in the Spanish language, but I had managed to pick up some odd phrases in that lingo, so I knew what he was driving at. The mate seemed to agree, and they talked a little more. I didn't understand, but guessed it was about me.

"The pirate captain, after a short confab with the mate, turned round and spoke to me. 'Well, my man,' said he, 'I don't mind telling you that you've hit the mark in guessing that this is the *Red Rover,* and a pirate. I believe she has made something of a reputation for herself,' he added proudly.

"I bowed.

" 'Now, I have a proposal to make to you. We're rather short-handed. We need two or three brave fellows, and I am inclined to think, from your bearing, that you will suit us. Now, if you would like it, you shall be admitted to equal privileges with the rest of the crew, with an equal share of whatever booty we manage to pick up, and that, I may tell you, is not small. Here, Roderigo, step forward, and tell this man how much your share was last year.'

"Roderigo, a villainous-looking fellow, stepped forward and answered: 'Nearly two thousand dollars in goods and money.'

" 'You see, then, what are the inducements. Will you join us or not?'

"Now, I very well knew what the consequences of my refusal would be, so I replied, without a moment's hesitation, 'I will.' "

"What, did you become a pirate?" asked Charlie, horror struck.

"Pretty much in the same way that you became a sailor, my lad; because I couldn't help it."

"And did you join in robbing vessels, and killing all on board?"

"Hold on, my lad; you're a little too fast for me. You'll know in due time. The pirate captain seemed pleased with my promptness, and made me sign the books. I should have given a wrong name, only I had given the

right one when I was hailed, though, for that matter, Sturdy isn't my right name. The captain told me, in a very polite sort of way, that if I should undertake to play them false, or interfere with them in any way, I should be pitched overboard. As this threat did not seem to trouble me much, he seemed to be satisfied that it was all right with me. In the course of a day or two, I got acquainted with the crew. They were mostly Spaniards, but there was a sprinkling of other nations—French, Danes, Germans, and one Englishman."

"Were there any Yankees?"

"No, I'm proud to say there wasn't one except myself, and I wasn't there of my own free will. Piracy doesn't chime in with our Yankee notions, and it's my belief you'll find precious few full-blooded Yankees that are engaged in the business."

"How did you get out of their clutches?" asked Charlie.

"That's what I'm coming to by and by. For a few days we didn't meet a vessel, or, at least, one that was alone, and so would do to attack. I was glad of that, for I was ready enough to do my duty on board the ship, but I knew that, just as soon as we met a vessel, I should be expected to do my share of the fighting, and it went against my grain to engage in any such villainous business as that. However, I thought I wouldn't borrow trouble, but wait til lit came, and then I could decide what to do.

"At last I heard the cry I so much dreaded, 'Sail ho!'

from one of the crew, who had been sent aloft to give notice of an approaching vessel.

"'Where away?' shouted the pirate captain.

"'To the eastward.'

"Orders were at once given to change the course of the vessel, and to make for the stranger. As soon as she saw us she made every effort to get away, but the *Red Rover* was too swift for her. When we got within a short distance, I made out the vessel to be the *Sally Ann,* which had left port about the time the *Peregrine* did. I knew some of those on board very well, and the captain was an old schoolmate of mine.

"'What would they think,' I couldn't help saying to myself, with a groan, 'if they knew their old messmate was regularly enrolled among the crew of the pirate that is overhauling them?'"

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW TO ESCAPE FROM A PIRATE.

Bill Sturdy paused to take a whiff at his pipe, and then resumed his story, in which Charlie manifested no slight interest.

"I was taken all aback," he continued, "when I found it was the *Sally Ann* I was expected to join hands with the pirates against. I couldn't help thinking of the many pleasant hours I had spent on board that vessel, chatting and spinning yarns with the crew. What to do I didn't know.

"The pirates were already clearing for action, and all seemed as busy as bees. You ought to have seen the eager look there was on their villainous faces, as they watched the *Sally Ann*, just, for all the world, like a crafty spider lying in wait for a fat fly.

"Just then the captain came up to where I was standing and fixed his sharp glance on me. 'Now, my man,' said he, 'here's a chance for you to distinguish yourself. That vessel will no doubt prove a rich prize. Do your duty like a man in the coming engagement and you shall have a good share of the spoils. If you don't, or if you prove false to us, you know your fat

"He pointed to the yardarm, as much as to say that I should be strung up if I refused obedience, and I've no doubt he would have kept his word.

"I just answered, 'Aye, aye, sir,' without looking particularly concerned.

" 'What will you do to the crew when the ship has fallen into your hands?' I asked.

" 'Send them to Davy Jones' locker,' he said, with no more compunction than if he were speaking of a litter of kittens.

"Well, I felt as if I was in a pretty tight place; some like a man I've heard of somewhere, who was being chased by a buffalo. At last he came to a precipice a hundred feet high. Of course it would be death for him to jump off and it would be just as much death for him to stay where he was. So he just waited till the old buffalo was close to him, and then he dodged out of the way, and the buffalo, who was going at full speed, leaped over the precipice, and was dashed to pieces. Well, I thought whether I couldn't do something of that kind. I knew that, if I shouldn't fight, the pirates would be as good as their word, and kill me, and, if I did, I should be guilty of piracy, and be liable to be hung as a pirate, if ever I got caught."

"That was a pretty hard choice," said Charlie.

"So it seemed to me," said Bill. "The only thing I thought of that would do me any good was to turn upon the pirates some way. If I could only have jumped into

the water, unobserved, and swam to the other ship, I would have fought to the last in their defense."

"Why didn't you do it?"

"Well, my lad, there were two objections. In the first place the pirates would have seen what I was at and fired at me in the water. In the second place, the sailors on board the *Sally Ann,* thinking that I was a pirate, would have suspected I was up to some mischief, and so, most likely, they would have blazed away at me, too. So, between the two fires, I shouldn't have stood a very good chance."

"I don't know but you are right."

"No, my lad, it didn't take me very long to decide that there was nothing to be gained in that way. At that moment I chanced to go down below for something, when my eye rested on—what do you think?"

"What was it?"

"It was a keg of powder," said Bill, shaking the ashes from his pipe. "Perhaps, my lad, you can guess what thought that put me up to."

"Was it to blow them all up?" asked Charlie, in excitement.

"You've hit it, my lad."

"But that would be dangerous to you."

"I knew that well enough," said the sailor. "There was precious little chance of old Bill Sturdy living to tell the story; but, my lad, I'll tell you what made me overlook that. I must either turn pirate and always remain so, with a

pretty considerable chance of swinging from the gallows some time, or else be butchered by the pirates for refusing to join them. So, as there didn't seem to be much but death in prospect, that consideration didn't weigh much. Then I thought that, if I did die by the explosion, I should have the satisfaction of knowing that the rascally pirates would share my fate, and the *Red Rover*, the scourge of the seas, would never do any more harm. Besides that, I should save the *Sally Ann* and the lives of the captain and crew, and that was something glorious to think of."

The boy's cheek glowed with sympathetic ardor, and he clasped Bill Sturdy's rough hand, in token of understanding and appreciating his motive.

"That seemed the only way open to me," resumed Bill, "and I determined to adopt it. Of course there were nine chances out of ten that I should be blown up with the rest of them, but still there was a possibility of escape. I couldn't help thinking of that, and the more I thought, the more I had a kind of feeling that I should escape. I thought I would go up on deck a minute, before carrying out my design, and see what was going on. Well, the pirates had about got ready for action. The decks had been cleared, the cutlasses and pistols and other murderous weapons had been distributed among the men, and, altogether, there seemed precious little chance for the poor fellows on board the *Sally Ann*, especially, as I knew well enough, that they had no cannon, and only a few pistols, that were not likely to do them much good.

"There wasn't much time to lose, as the action was going to commence. So I slipped down below, and fixed a slow match, so that it would reach the powder in about a minute. I had just about got it fixed, when who should I see coming down but the pirate captain. It seemed as if all my plans were going to be knocked in the head. No doubt he suspected that all was not as it should be, and was coming down to see what was to pay. I felt desperate, and fetched him as powerful a blow as I was able on the side of the head, and he fell like an ox, pretty effectually stunned."

"What next?"

"The next thing I did was to hurry upon deck. 'Where's the captain?' asked the mate. 'He'll be up directly,' said I. And so he was, but not in the sense that he understood it.

"Well, I listened on deck for about half a minute in a terrible state of anxiety, you may be sure. Then, feeling that it was not safe for me to stay any longer, I jumped into the water and began to swim toward the *Sally Ann*. As my head rose above the water, I saw the mate about to fire at me, and I dove. When my head was fairly out of water again, such a sound as smote upon my ear! The light had reached the powder, and there was a terrible explosion. The ship was shattered to pieces. The pirates were hurled into the air, some with mutilated limbs, and I rather think that some of them were considerably astonished. The captain did go up, as I promised. He was flung a hundred feet into the air, and never came down again alive. For

my part, I was lucky enough to reach the *Sally Ann*, untouched by the falling fragments. When they found out who I was, and how I had saved them, their gratitude knew no bounds. The owners made up a purse of two thousand dollars, and presented it to me."

"And what did you do with it?"

"When I got back to Boston I put it in one of the places you call savings banks, and I expect it's there now."

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANTONIO'S PLOT.

Such is a specimen of the yarns—sometimes true—sometimes spun out of whole cloth—with which the sailors amused themselves and beguiled the tedium of the night-watch.

The companionship of honest and stout-hearted Bill Sturdy proved a great source of happiness to Charlie, and enabled him to bear up, as otherwise he might have found it difficult to do, under the hardships of his condition, the persecution of the captain and the mate, who had not forgotten their animosity, and the uncertainty he could not but feel as to the situation in which his mother was left, with the painful doubt as to whether she would be able to support herself till he could return and relieve her necessities.

"When we get back, my lad," said Bill Sturdy, "I'll put half that money in a savings bank in your name, so that if you and your mother want it at any time, you can use it."

"No, Bill," said Charlie earnestly, "you are very kind, but I couldn't consent to that."

"And why not, my lad? What do I want of it? I've got neither chick nor child, and am not likely to have. I've taken a fancy to you, and the money'll do you more good than me."

"You are *very* kind," said Charlie gratefully; "but I mustn't take advantage of your generosity."

"Nonsense, my lad. I know what it is to be a poor boy, without money or friends, and nowadays money will bring friends. Mayhap it'll start you in some business, and when you get rich you can pay me; or if, by and by, I take a notion to come to anchor on shore, you'll give me a corner in your house, where I can smoke my pipe and spin my yarns."

"That I will, Bill," said Charlie, seizing the old sailor's rough hand. "If I have a roof to cover me, it shall cover you, too."

"Thank you, my lad," said Bill. "I know you would."

Under Bill Sturdy's rough exterior there was a kind heart which warmed to the boy, partly because of his solitary position on board, partly on account of his manliness and attractive qualities. So they became fast friends.

Charlie did not find his duties altogether distasteful. He was a bright, active boy, not without ambition, and resolved to do himself credit in his new position, however it may have been forced upon him. For this reason it was that the captain and the mate, although they watched him with lynx eyes, hoping that he would afford them some pretext for showing their rancorous feelings towards him, watched

ineffectually. By his activity and his frank and manly disposition he was fast ingratiating himself with the crew, who were the more disposed to espouse his cause, because they could not fail to notice the injustice with which the officers treated him.

But trouble was brewing for Charlie, and soon the storm broke forth.

The scuffle between Bill Sturdy and Antonio, of which Charlie was the occasion, will not have been forgotten. Antonio had before hated Bill on account of his superiority in strength, which deprived him of his former champion's life. This feeling was increased by the issue of the contest which had resulted in his humiliation and defeat, and his anger was also stirred up against Charlie, who had been the occasion of it. Yet he did not dare to venture upon abuse, because it was generally understood that Bill Sturdy had constituted himself Charlie's especial friend and protector.

But there were other ways of compassing his end. Antonio felt that his revenge must be a more secret one, and he desired that it should involve both Bill Sturdy and his protégé. If he could only involve Charlie in some offense which would draw upon him the active displeasure of the captain, and subject him to public punishment, he felt sure that Bill Sturdy would not stand tamely by and see it inflicted, while any interference would be insubordination, and get his rival into serious trouble.

After reflection Antonio decided to implicate Charlie in a charge of theft. It happened that the captain had a valu-

able gold ring, set with diamonds, which he prized even beyond its pecuniary value. Captain Brace, however, was not a careful man. He would sometimes take off his ring, and lay it down on the cabin table. On one occasion Antonio, while upon deck, observed the captain pass, and ascertained by a swift glance that the ring was not upon his finger. He watched his opportunity, and, slipping down into the cabin, found, as he anticipated, the ring upon the table. It was the work of a moment to snatch and conceal it in his pocket.

He returned to the work in which he had been engaged, and resumed it, supposing he had not been observed. In this he was mistaken.

Bill Sturdy had had his eye upon him from the time of his difficulty with him. He could see Antonio's craftiness in his face, and the apparent affability and conciliatory manner of the latter afterward had by no means deceived him.

"Look out for squalls," thought he. "He's too fair-seeming to be trusted. I've no doubt he's hatching up something or other. I'll keep a sharp lookout for him."

When Antonio made his stealthy visit to the cabin, as above described, the vigilant eye of Bill Sturdy was upon him and his movements. In a moment he reappeared. Bill saw it all out of the corner of his eye, though he appeared to be looking in just the opposite direction.

"What's the fellow up to?" he thought. "Some mischief,

I reckon. What business has he in the cabin? I must watch him."

Of course, Antonio's object will be understood. He meant to place the ring in Charlie's chest, and when the loss should be discovered by the captain, he would suggest that a general search should be instituted, the result of which must involve the boy.

Charlie was, of course, quite unconscious of the machinations which were being formed against him, and even Bill was not yet quite certain for what purpose Antonio had made his visit to the cabin.

Antonio felt the necessity of doing quickly what he had in contemplation. Going below, he made his way to the chest belonging to Charlie, and, lifting the cover, for it was unlocked, let the ring drop into one corner.

Bill Sturdy saw his second disappearance from the deck. He could not ascertain precisely what he was doing, without following him—a thing which he did not wish to do, since it would arouse Antonio's suspicions, and place him on his guard.

Antonio came up with an expression of malicious satisfaction, which Bill did not fail to notice.

"I wish," he thought, "I knew exactly what the fellow has been doing."

Bill was destined to learn ere long.

The captain went below, and glanced carelessly at the place where he remembered to have left the ring. To his surprise it had disappeared.

"What can have become of it?" he thought.

He instituted a careful examination, but did not succeed in finding the lost article. It occurred to him that he might have been mistaken about leaving it on the table. It might possibly have been dropped upon deck.

Going on deck, he communicated his loss to the crew, and requested a general search.

"I think, Captain Brace," said Antonio, officiously, "that I can guess where it is."

"Where?"

"I saw that boy have it," pointing to Charlie.

"It's a lie!" exclaimed Charlie, surprised and indignant.

"We'll see about that," said the captain, with a sneer. "Do you know what he did with it, Antonio?"

"I think he may have hidden it in his chest."

"Let his chest be brought on deck and publicly examined. If he is found guilty he shall be punished, as sure as my name is Brace."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHARLIE GETS INTO TROUBLE.

Charlie, at first taken by surprise when the charge of theft was brought against him, now looked scornfully indignant. Ignorant of the ways of the world, and the wickedness of which some men are capable, he never, for a moment, feared the result of the investigation. As for the crew, they had already become interested in his favor, and now pitied him for the unfortunate position in which he found himself placed. None of them believed him guilty.

As the captain had directed, his chest was brought on deck. Before this was searched, however, he was subjected to a personal examination, at which nothing was discovered. There was a murmur of satisfaction.

"The lad never stole the ring," said a stout seaman, standing next to the real perpetrator of the crime, Antonio.

"Don't be too sure of that," said the Spaniard, in a malignant tone. "His chest hasn't been searched yet."

"I don't care for that; I can tell by his face. A lad, with such a figure-head as that, wouldn't do anything mean or dishonorable."

"You seem to have taken a great fancy to him," sneered

Antonio. "You mustn't trust too much to appearances. He looks to me as if he were guilty."

Charlie's cheeks were flushed, but not with shame or confusion. It was indignation, that he should be suspected of such a disgraceful crime.

By his side stood Bill Sturdy, who took an opportunity of whispering into his ear: "Never you mind, my lad, even if the ring is found in your chest."

"But it isn't there," said Charlie.

"It may be," said Bill, who, by this time, suspected the nature of Antonio's two errands below.

"How should it be there?" asked Charlie, quite in the dark.

"It might have been put there, my lad."

"But who could put it there?"

"Hark you, my lad," said Bill, still further lowering his tones; "you've got more than one enemy on board this ship."

"The mate."

"Yes, and the captain, too, for that matter."

"But neither of them would put the ring in my chest."

"No, probably not."

"Then who would?"

"There is another enemy besides these two."

"Do you mean Antonio?"

"Yes."

"But he seemed friendly lately."

"He isn't to be trusted, my lad. He's borne a grudge

against both of us ever since I got the better of him the other day, and he's made up his mind to be revenged. I've been watching him when he didn't suspect it, and know more than he thinks I do."

"Do you know anything of this affair, Bill?" asked Charlie, looking up hopefully into the face of his friend.

"I expect I do."

"What is it?" questioned our hero eagerly.

"I shall save it till it will do some good. But see, they have nearly finished searching your chest. Perhaps the ring is not there, after all."

As Bill said, the search was nearly completed. Charlie's clothes had been unceremoniously tumbled out upon deck, which was not calculated to improve their appearance, and the captain and mate, who had shown themselves particularly active on the occasion, were peering about in search of the lost ring.

It chanced, however, that the ring had got in a fold of one of the shirts which lay upon deck. Of course, therefore, the search in the chest proved unavailing.

"I doubt whether it is here," said the captain, in a tone of disappointment."

"Let us look a little longer," said the mate, who could not so easily resign the chance of getting into trouble the boy whom he hated with a malevolence such as his nature was capable of.

Antonio became alarmed at the prospect of all his plans being frustrated by a failure to find the ring.

When the mate also gave up the search, he came forward, and, addressing the captain, said:

"Captain Brace, if you will let me assist in the search, perhaps I can succeed in finding it."

"You are the one that saw the boy have it, are you?" queried the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"How long since?"

"About half an hour."

"Why did you not mention it at that time?"

"I thought perhaps he had only picked it up, and would give it back to you," said the Spaniard, in some confusion. "I didn't want to charge him with the theft till I felt sure he meant to steal it."

"And what makes you feel sure he did so intend?"

"Because when you said the ring was lost, he did not come forward and restore it."

"Aye," said Captain Brace, "that is strongly against him. If it is found that he has concealed it anywhere, he shall repent it."

"What reason have you for supposing that he concealed it in his chest?" asked the mate.

"Because I saw him go down below," answered Antonio, with unblushing falsehood.

"It's a lie," said Charlie boldly. "I haven't been below this morning."

"Silence!" thundered the captain, scowling menacingly; "don't add falsehood to theft."

"I haven't been guilty of theft," said Charlie boldly.

"Silence!" again thundered the captain, "or it will be the worse for you."

"You had better not say anything more, my lad," whispered Bill Sturdy; "we shall yet bring you off with flying colors. Don't you fear. Bill Sturdy is your friend, and he will stand by you."

Charlie looked grateful.

"I think, Captain Brace," said Randall, "that we may venture to let Antonio assist us, since he may succeed where we have failed."

"Very well," said the captain, "I have no objection to offer. On the contrary, if he succeeds in finding it, I will take care that he shall be rewarded."

Antonio was already on his knees before the chest. There was a murmur of disapprobation among the crew. They were in favor of fair play, and this undue eagerness to convict the boy of guilt did not commend itself to their sense of justice and generosity. But Antonio cared little for the sensation which his conduct might excite among his fellow seamen. He cared more for the gratification of his revenge than for personal popularity.

A glance satisfied him that the ring was not in the chest. He next began to examine carefully the clothes which had been taken out and were lying on deck.

In lifting and shaking a shirt the ring rolled out.

"*There is your ring*, Captain Brace," said he, in a tone of exultation, as he picked it up and extended it to the captain.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REAL CULPRIT DISCOVERED.

The discovery of the ring made a profound impression upon all present. The sailors looked at first surprised and then sorrowful, for they could not escape the conviction that Charlie had been tempted by the richness of the prize and had actually stolen it.

Charlie was overwhelmed with astonishment and indignation, and the thought that he was considered guilty made him feel very uncomfortable.

The captain, the mate, and Antonio could hardly conceal the satisfaction which this discovery afforded them. Each had motives of his own, the captain being, of course, glad to recover an article which he valued, but of the three perhaps there was none that felt a more malicious satisfaction than the one who had devised the plot. He glanced exultantly at Charlie and Bill Sturdy, who he knew would be equally affected by his favorite's misfortune.

Bill Sturdy returned his glance composedly. Antonio was disappointed to find that he neither looked disturbed nor frightened. Bill waited calmly the course of events.

Captain Brace exclaimed in his harsh voice:

"It seems we have a thief on board. We'll soon teach

him the way all such rascals will be treated on board this ship. Boy, take off your jacket."

"Captain Brace," said Charlie, with glowing cheeks and in a tone that might have convinced any one not prejudiced against him, "just hear what I am going to say. I didn't steal your ring, indeed I didn't. I would scorn to do such a thing. Ever since I could speak my mother has taught me how mean a thing it is to take what belongs to another. I own that appearances are against me."

Here Randall stepped forward with an evil smile upon his face.

"Captain Brace, as I am the uncle of this boy, perhaps you will allow me to tell you how much dependence can be placed upon his word. He is an artful young rascal. I am sorry to say it, since he is related to me, but the fact is, he was on the point of being arrested for theft just before we sailed, when I, to protect him from imprisonment, and snatch him from the custody of the law, took him to sea with me. I have said this against my will, because, although I know you, Captain Brace, would not be imposed upon by his story, I thought there might be others that would."

The sailors looked at each other, not knowing what to think, while the captain exclaimed sternly:

"So this is not the first of your tricks, my fine fellow. You shall have justice done you on the sea, if not on the land. Strip, I tell you."

Charlie was so thunderstruck by Randall's bold falsehood

that he actually had nothing to say. He mechanically began to take off his jacket.

At this moment the voice of Bill Sturdy was heard, as, hitching up his trousers a bit, he left the mast against which he had been leaning, and advanced into the midst of the assembled sailors.

"Captain Brace," he said, in a tone firm but respectful, "if you'll allow me, I'll tell you what I know of this affair."

"So you know something about it, do you?"

"I thought so," said Randall, in a low voice, for he had disliked Bill from the first.

"I do," was the composed reply, "but I have no reason to be ashamed of what I do know."

"I think," said the mate, "we already know all that we require, since we have discovered the thief."

He was apprehensive, from Bill's tone, that what he had to say might put a different face on the matter, and perhaps clear Charlie.

Captain Brace, however, did not choose to be guided by the implied advice of his first officer. He had a curiosity to learn what Sturdy had to communicate.

"Say on; what do you know of this affair?"

"Very well, sir. About an hour ago you came up from the cabin and began to pace the deck."

The captain assented.

"As you passed I observed one of the crew take a hasty glance at your finger. I looked, also, and saw that you were not wearing your ring as usual."

"Well, who was the sailor?"

"I would rather not mention his name just at present, unless you insist upon it."

The captain did not insist, and Sturdy proceeded.

"I thought I would just keep my eyes open, and see what followed. Pretty soon the sailor I spoke of looked about him to see if he was unnoticed, and crept slyly down below. A little later he came up and went to work again."

"Was that all?"

"It was not," answered Sturdy. "He kept at work about ten minutes longer, and then stole toward the forecastle with the same secrecy as before. I should have followed him down, but I thought he would notice me. My mind misgave me that he was in some mischief. I determined I would remember what happened, and, if anything turned up, I should know how it came about."

"And what do you make of all this?" said Randall, sneering. "To my mind it is a foolish story, and, even if true, amounts to nothing."

"I'll tell you what I think, and am about sure of, Mr. Randall," said Bill, without betraying a particle of excitement, but continuing to speak with the same calm composure as before, "I believe that man in the first place stole the captain's ring, and then went and put it into the lad's chest, in order that it might be found there, and the guilt fixed on him."

This assertion made a sensation among the crew, and there was a general feeling that Charlie was innocent.

"Who is this man of whom you have been speaking?" said the captain.

"I don't need to name him," said Bill. "I don't need even to look at him. If you will look around you, Captain Brace, you can tell by his looks who the man is that has hatched this wicked plot against an innocent boy."

Instantly the eyes of all, as if by some common impulse, were fixed upon the form of Antonio, who, confused, thunderstruck by the minute detail of his movements, which he had supposed unnoticed by any one, now stood with his face alternately flushing and paling, looking the very picture of detected guilt.

Unable to bear the glances fixed upon him, he exclaimed in a voice hoarse with passion:

"It is false. I never did it."

"No one has accused you, that I know of," said Bill Sturdy, coolly. "Leastways, nobody that I know of, excepting yourself, and your face is enough to do that. However, I don't mind saying that you are the man I mean. If Captain Brace will take the trouble to remember, you are the first one that thought of searching for the ring, and told him falsely that you had seen it in the hands of that lad there. Then, again, when the chest had been searched, and the ring couldn't be found, you came forward and offered to look for it yourself, and finally you did find it. That's all I've got to say, only, if you are not the real thief I am a liar, and so is that face of yours."

Carried away by his rage, Antonio, forgetting the prudence which his past experience might have taught him, threw himself suddenly upon Bill Sturdy, and nearly succeeded in laying him prostrate upon the deck.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STORM BREWING.

Antonio's assault was so unexpected that Bill Sturdy, being, of course, quite unprepared for it, staggered and seemed about to fall. But, as one who slips upon the ice instinctively makes an effort to preserve his equilibrium, so Sturdy immediately recovered from the momentary disadvantage, and, seizing Antonio with both hands, threw him to the deck without any great apparent effort.

Probably if Antonio had gained the advantage, Captain Brace would have been in no haste to put a stop to the conflict. As it was, his brows knit with anger as he exclaimed, in a stentorian voice:

"Stop this fighting, you lubbers! Don't you know better the respect which is due to my presence? I'll let you know that I am not to be insulted on my own deck."

"It wasn't a fight of my seeking, Captain Brace," said Bill coolly. "I ain't disposed to be quarrelsome, and I guess he won't want to try it again immediately."

As he said this he glanced at Antonio, who, sorely bruised by the fall, was slowly rising from the deck, and slinking away with a crestfallen and malignant look. Had he not been moved by an uncontrollable impulse of rage and dis-

appointment, he would scarcely have ventured upon this open attack, knowing, as had been incontestably proved, that he was no match for the Herculean strength of Bill Sturdy.

"Silence!" roared the captain, in answer to Bill's vindication of himself. "One would think from your manner that you were the captain of this ship instead of me."

"If I were the captain," said Bill, bluntly, "I'd have that man, pointing to Antonio, "put ashore at the first port. I wouldn't harbor such a rascal aboard the ship."

"Silence!" again thundered the captain. "Don't you know your place? If you don't, by all the saints in the calendar, I'll make you know it before twenty-four hours have passed over your head. Let me tell you that I don't require any help in commanding this vessel. When I do, I will call on you. Till then, you may keep your advice to yourself."

Bill shrugged his shoulders, but thought it prudent, on the whole, to say nothing. Not that he feared for himself. He had a good deal of confidence in the strength with which nature had endowed him, but he feared that any unguarded words of his might incite the captain and mate to visit new hardships upon his young protégé, Charlie.

"As to the matter of the ring," said the captain, "my mind is not made up. Mr. Randall, will you attend me?"

The mate went below with Captain Brace.

After a moment's silence, the captain said: "I don't like that fellow, Mr. Randall."

"Do you mean Antonio?"

"No; this Sturdy, who takes such airs upon himself."

"Neither do I," answered Randall promptly.

"He's a mutinous rebel. I can see it in his eye," pursued the captain.

"I have no doubt he would be if he had a good opportunity."

"Perhaps I shall give him one," said the captain significantly.

"He's as strong as a bull," said the mate.

"Yes; the fellow has fists like sledge-hammers, but he may use them once too often. We will speak of that hereafter. Now, what do you think of this robbery?"

"I suppose Antonio was the thief," said Randall reluctantly.

"You think Sturdy's story is correct?"

"Yes; Antonio is a deep rascal, though of the two I hate Sturdy most."

"Did you suppose your nephew to be the thief before the latter told his story?"

"I did not."

"Yet you countenanced the charge."

"Because I thought a flogging would do the boy no harm."

"You don't seem to have any great affection for your nephew."

"I do not."

"And the reason?"

"Is simply this: The boy's mother jilted me, or, rather, refused me outright when I offered my hand in marriage."

"Ha! that's where the shoe pinches."

"You are right."

"Well, I don't care to interfere with any little private revenge you may desire to take, as long as it chimes in with my own purposes. The boy shall be flogged if you wish it."

"I do."

"Find some pretext, then, as long as the charge of robbery won't serve."

"Then," said Randall, "you might announce that, although the charge of theft has not been sustained, he has been guilty of an offense that calls for punishment—insolence to his officers."

"That is a good idea. And in regard to Antonio——"

"I have no doubt the rascal stole the ring, and deserves punishment, but I don't want him flogged, as it would gratify Sturdy too much."

"My own feeling."

"You can say that you have been unable to determine who is guilty in the matter, and shall wait for further evidence."

"Very well conceived, Mr. Randall. I shall follow your advice, and thank you for it."

"I am glad to have been of service to you, Captain Brace."

"And now, Mr. Randall, if you will go on deck, I will be up presently."

The mate reappeared on deck with a satisfied air, occasionally looking with a glance of triumphant spite at Charlie, who was standing beside his tried and trusty friend Bill Sturdy.

"You don't know what's in store for you, my lad," he muttered. "Pity his mother could not be here to see his fair flesh quivering under the keen lash. Her heart would feel every stroke. She might repent, then, the scorn with which she repelled the suit of John Randall. How I hate that boy! He brings up his father before me. So much the better. When he shrinks beneath the lash, I shall think it is my old rival upon whom it is falling."

Bill Sturdy, meanwhile, said, in a low voice, to Charlie:

"I don't like the looks of the mate. He's hatching mischief of some kind, if I'm not greatly mistaken."

"Against us?"

"That's what I mistrust, my lad; against one or both of us. He hates us both, and I ain't quite sure which he hates the most."

"And yet I never did him any injury."

"Then he's done you some harm, depend upon it. People hate worst those they have injured most, and he's done you a great wrong in stealing you from home."

"What do you suppose made him do that, Bill?"

"He had some private reason; there ain't a question

about that. It wasn't because we were in want of a boy. We might have picked up plenty that would have been glad to come."

"I'm afraid you'll get into trouble with him for taking my part," said Charlie, with some anixety.

"Don't trouble yourself about me," said Sturdy, shrugging his shoulders. "I ain't in any way frightened by his black looks, and if he tries to do you any mischief, he'll find you've got one friend."

Before Charlie had an opportunity to reply, Captain Brace came on deck, and looked around him with a glance that showed a storm was brewing.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LASH.

"Pipe all hands to see punishment inflicted," ordered Captain Brace.

Charlie and Bill Sturdy looked at each other, uncertain where the blow was to fall.

"It must be Antonio," thought Charlie.

Evidently Antonio was of the same opinion, for over his swarthy face there stole a pallor which showed his apprehension.

Such was the understanding of the crew, also, as they could think of no other wrongdoer. Little pity was excited in behalf of the supposed sufferer. He had so abused his position when champion of the crew, that he had forfeited the good-will of all; and even if this had not been the case, his treacherous and mean attempt to bring Charlie into trouble would have been sufficient to bring him into disfavor.

The uncertainty as to the victim was dissipated by the captain's next words.

"Jack Randall, come here!"

Charlie came forward.

"Boy," said Captain Brace sternly, "you were guilty

of insolence to me this morning. This shall never go unpunished while I am in command of a vessel. As to the ring, you may or may not have stolen it. It rests between you and Antonio. As it cannot be proved of either, neither will be punished on this account."

Antonio's sallow face lighted up with joy at this unexpected escape, a joy which was not reflected on the faces of the crew.

"It is for insolence, therefore, and not on account of theft," pursued the captain, "that I sentence you, Jack Randall, to a dozen lashes on the bare back. Off with your jacket!"

Charlie was a brave boy, but the prospect of this ignominious punishment caused his cheek to pale and his voice to tremble as he exclaimed:

"Captain Brace, if I have been guilty of insolence or want of proper respect to you, it was not intentional. Do not compel me to submit to this disgraceful punishment."

There was a movement of sympathy among the crew, and more than one heart softened at the sight of Charlie's manly front, though his lips quivered, and pride alone kept back the tears from his eyes. Bill Sturdy started, but checked himself, to hear what the captain would say in response.

"It is too late," he said coldly. "You should have thought of all that before you indulged in insolence."

"But——"

"It is too late, I say," roared the captain, irritated.

"Strip, you young rascal, or you shall have some help about it, and that of a rough kind."

It seemed as if all chance of escape was over for poor Charlie. But at that moment Bill Sturdy pressed forward, and, hitching up his trousers, as he was wont to do preparatory to speaking, said, in a distinct tone of voice: "Captain Brace."

"Well?" said the captain. "What have you to say?"

"I should like to make a proposal to you, sir."

"A proposal," repeated the captain, mystified. "What am I to understand by that?"

"It's just this, Captain Brace. You're the captain of this vessel, and you've got a right to flog that boy, I suppose, according to the law."

"Of course I have," said the captain fiercely. "Do you presume to question that right?"

"I don't think proper to question it just now," said Bill; "but, Captain Brace, just look at that boy. Look at his bright, honest face, and you can't have the heart to abuse him."

"Abuse him!" exclaimed the captain, stamping on the deck in his fury; "say that again, and I'll have you flogged with him."

"It was something of that kind that I was going to propose," said Bill Sturdy.

Captain Brace stared at him in astonishment, a feeling which was shared by the crew.

"If you want to be flogged," said the captain grimly, "we will try to accommodate you."

"It is in this way that I mean," exclaimed Bill. "I've taken a liking to that lad, and I've promised him I'll stand his friend. Now, Captain Brace, if somebody must be flogged, spare him, and flog me in his place."

Surprise was depicted on every face, and the sunburned and rough-visaged men about him felt an involuntary thrill of respect and admiration, as Sturdy manfully came forward and offered his own back to the punishment, which is properly regarded as an insult to manhood, though the disgrace attaches not to the one who endures, but to the one who inflicts it.

Charlie was the first to speak. His generous heart revolted at the idea of escaping punishment at the expense of his friend.

"No, Bill Sturdy," said he manfully, "I don't want you to suffer in my place. It'll be hard to bear it," and his lip quivered; "but it would be weak and cowardly for me to let anybody else suffer in my place."

Charlie began to take off his jacket.

There was a murmuring among the crew, testifying to the excitement which they felt.

"Put on your jacket, my lad," said Bill. "I'm older and tougher than you, and I can bear it better."

And the stout seaman pulled off his shirt, and displayed his brawny shoulders, and a chest whose breadth

and depth betokened a strength which could not be styled less than Herculean.

Antonio looked on, his eyes blazing with vindictive joy. Whichever was flogged, his satisfaction would be equal.

"Hark you!" exclaimed Captain Brace, interfering at this juncture. "I think that I shall choose to have a voice in this matter. So you wish," turning to Sturdy, "to relieve this boy of his punishment, do you?"

"I do," said the old seaman.

"I don't want him to," interrupted Charlie. "It is mine, and I will bear it."

"It seems the parties are not agreed," said the captain sardonically.

"Spare him," said Bill Sturdy, his eyes resting affectionately on Charlie. "He is so young."

"Perhaps the best way in which I can please you both is to divide the punishment between you. I had sentenced this lad to receive twelve lashes. Since you wish to do him a service, you shall receive six, and he the other six."

"I do not consent," said Sturdy, comprehending the captain's purpose to humiliate both. "If his back is to receive a single lash, my offer will not save him from the disgrace, and that is worse than the pain."

At this juncture the mate whispered something in the captain's ear. The face of the latter lighted up with satisfaction, and his next words revealed the nature of the mate's suggestion.

"I consent to the substitution," he said, and then paused.

Bill Sturdy's face glowed with generous satisfaction, and with heroic forgetfulness of self, he began to strip for punishment.

A moment, and his back, broad and ample, was bared, and the thick, corded muscles could be seen.

"Antonio, come forward," said Captain Brace.

Antonio advanced amid the general surprise of the crew, and somewhat to his own, and stood still, awaiting orders.

"Now," said Captain Brace, his tone showing his malignant satisfaction, "I appoint you as my deputy to administer twelve lashes to this man; mind that you don't spare him."

Antonio did not need this injunction. His eyes were full of fiendish triumph, as he seized the instrument of torture, and flourished it above his head.

As for Bill Sturdy, when he knew that Antonio was to be employed to inflict punishment upon him, this refinement of torture shook his resolution for a moment. It was, indeed, the bitterest drop in the cup. But not for an instant did his resolution falter. He would save Charlie at all hazards. He quickly recovered himself, and said in a firm voice:

"I am ready."

Instantly the lash was whirled aloft, and buried itself in his flesh.

There was a quiver, and that was all.

One—two—three—four——

In fast succession the blows fell upon his flesh, he meanwhile standing firmly braced, though his cheek was paler than its wont.

Charlie's heart sickened, and he closed his eyes to shut out the fearful spectacle.

As for Antonio, he seemed to revel in the task which had been assigned him. His eyes fairly danced with baleful light, and he seemed almost beside himself. It was this, perhaps, that led him to exceed by one the strokes which he had been ordered to administer.

A moment after and the lash was wrested from him by Bill Sturdy, who threw him to the deck, and with one powerful grasp tore the covering from his back, and buried the lash which had seared his own back in the flesh of his late executioner, who, with face distorted with fright and pain, roared for mercy.

"That is to pay for the blow you struck on your own account, you scoundrel," exclaimed Sturdy. "And now," as the lash descended once more with prodigious force, and the victim fairly writhed under it, "you are one in my debt."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TWO CONFERENCES.

So strongly were the sympathies of the crew with Sturdy, more especially since he had shown himself capable of such disinterested and heroic self-sacrifice, and so decidedly were their feelings enlisted against Antonio, who acted like a fiend rather than a man in the execution of the welcome duty assigned him by the captain, that this sudden turning of the tables, the summary revenge taken by Bill Sturdy in return for the additional blow Antonio had inflicted, was greeted with a triumphant shout from the sailors, which seemed to spring from them spontaneously.

Captain Brace bit his lip, and Randall's face darkened with rage. They felt that the humiliation which they had intended for Bill Sturdy had recoiled upon the head of their own agent.

The worst of it was they could not prudently resent it. Antonio had in the eyes of all been guilty of a glaring offense in exceeding his orders, and had justly brought upon himself the punishment he had received. However, the justice or injustice of the matter would have weighed little with Captain Brace if he had not been assured that

it would not be safe for him to go further. The law gave almost unlimited power to the commander of a vessel over the lives and liberties of those who were placed under him, yet most were aware that there was a point at which it was wise to pause. At the commencement of the scene, there had been audible murmurs among the crew, the significance of which the captain and mate would understand. The habit of subordination, and the knowledge that this was in a certain sense a voluntary act on the part of Bill Sturdy, had prevented anything more, but if the captain had gone to greater extremities, the consequences might have been serious.

Meanwhile Antonio picked himself up, smarting under the terrible wounds which had been inflicted by the lash wielded with the whole of Bill Sturdy's enormous strength. Indeed, although he had received but two stripes, and his enemy thirteen, it may be doubted whether the pain inflicted by those two were not equal to that of the greater number.

Antonio had slunk down into the forecastle to bathe his back and obtain fresh clothes, for his shirt had been rent asunder. Bill Sturdy, on the other hand, proceeded to attire himself on deck and went about his work, without showing outwardly the pain which he must have been suffering.

Captain Brace took no public notice of the retribution which had followed the punishment. He didn't dare to act as he wished, and, therefore, chose to pass it un-

noticed. But an hour afterward, as he sat in conference with the mate, his fury burst the bounds he had imposed upon it.

"Curse that fellow!" he exclaimed. "Is he forever destined to thwart my designs? I felt that I could willingly have flogged him myself till the last breath left his body."

"It is a pity Antonio ventured to exceed his orders."

"Yes, the fool was richly repaid for his act, but I could wish it had been by a different hand.

"That extra blow gave Sturdy a pretext for his summary vengeance. But for that his conduct could have been construed into mutiny and disrespect to you."

"And then I might have put him in irons."

"You might do it now, but for——"

"But for the crew, you would say. That alone prevents me. The fellow, unluckily, has secured their sympathy. Would that I could devise some way for taking vengeance safely upon this rebellious scoundrel."

The mate leaned his head upon his hand, and gave himself up to reflection. Something occurred to him, for, lifting his head again, he asked:

"Have you ever been in Rio Janeiro, Captain Brace?"

"Never but once, and that some nine or ten years ago."

"There are desperadoes in that city, as in others," pursued Randall, fixing his eyes intently upon the captain.

"I do not quite catch your meaning, Mr. Randall."

"Men who are little troubled by conscientious scruples,

but are willing to undertake the most dangerous and illegal enterprises—*for small consideration.*"

"I begin to understand you now," said the captain.

"Shall I proceed?"

"Do so."

The mate rightly construed this into an intimation that his proposition, though hinting at crime, would not prove distasteful to the captain. This, knowing the character of his superior officer, did not surprise him, and he proceeded.

"I think you apprehend my meaning, Captain Brace. This man is a thorn in our sides. He is exerting a bad influence on board the ship. He is undermining your influence with the crew."

"That is all true, Mr. Randall. What, then, is your advice in this state of affairs?"

"My advice is, that this fellow *should be removed.*"

"To a place better fitted for him," suggested the captain, with a grim smile.

"Precisely so."

"And through the agency of such men as you have spoken of?"

"That is my proposition."

"It deserves thinking of. May I ask if you have any acquaintance among the fraternity, or whether you have ever had any occasion to employ their services?"

"I did on one occasion."

"Do you mind giving the particulars?"

"To you, no. Some years since I shipped as common

sailor on board the *Porcupine,* bound from New York to Rio. On the voyage one of the sailors on several occasions insulted me, and I determined upon revenge. At Rio I fell in with a desperate character, who for a comparatively small sum engaged to do my bidding."

"Well."

"There is not much to tell. One night this man was passing through a narrow street, quite unsuspicious of danger, when he was suddenly struck from behind by a bludgeon, and—*he never came back to the ship.*"

"Did no suspicion attach to you?"

"How should there? Who was to betray me? Not my agent, or in so doing he would betray himself. This is the first time I have ever spoken of it, but I am safe with you."

"Perfectly. You say the consideration was small."

"Fifty dollars only. I dare say the fellow considered himself well paid. Besides he took whatever his victim had about him."

"Thank you for the suggestion, Mr. Randall. I will furnish the money, if you will undertake the management of the business when we reach Rio."

"With pleasure," replied the mate, and he probably spoke the truth.

While this conversation was going on Charlie in another part of the vessel was commiserating Bill Sturdy on his injuries.

"And it was on my account, too," said the boy, regretfully.

"Better me than you, my lad," said the old sailor stoutly. "Don't trouble yourself about that. It was my own free will, and if I had been unwilling all the power of the captain couldn't have made me submit to it. Besides there was one thing that repaid me for it all. Antonio got something he'll remember to the latest day of his life, I reckon. However, that ain't what I want to say now. It's just this: I haven't any particular inducements to stay aboard this vessel, and I've about made up my mind to give them the slip at the first port we come to, if you'll go with me."

"Where do we touch first?"

"At Rio, I surmise."

"I'm ready to go with you, Bill, whenever you say the word," said Charlie promptly.

"That's right, my lad."

And so the agreement was made.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DANGER THREATENS BILL STURDY.

It is my intention to pass rapidly over the time which intervened between the events which have been described and the arrival of the *Bouncing Betsy* at Rio Janeiro. Nothing happened of sufficient interest to call for record.

As for Charlie Codman and Bill Sturdy, their position was, unquestionably, more agreeable and less disturbed by incidents than before. This was not owing to any change in the feelings of the captain and mate, but in consequence of the iniquitous compact into which they had entered. They felt secure of ultimate vengeance; they could, therefore, afford to wait. Indeed, they felt that they should be more likely to secure the end they had in view if, for the present, they should so act as to lull to sleep any suspicions which might be entertained of their agency in the affair after it was over.

But Bill Sturdy was not deceived. He determined to keep his "weather-eye open," as he expressed it, and be on the lookout for squalls.

So the time passed.

It was a bright, tropical day. The thick garments which all had worn on leaving port were laid aside, and every one was dressed in light and thin attire.

"We shall probably reach Rio to-morrow, Mr. Randall," observed the captain.

"Yes; if the present wind holds, there can be no doubt of it."

"And the little plan which we have been contemplating need no longer be delayed."

Randall smiled acquiescence.

The wind held favorable, and the next evening saw them in port.

The captain and mate went on shore, leaving the vessel in charge of the second mate.

We have nothing to do with the motions of the captain, but will follow Randall, who, never backward in ill-doing, at once set about the execution of his scheme.

Having been in the city before, he was well acquainted with localities, and, therefore, was able to direct his steps at once to that quarter where he felt he was most likely to meet the man he was in quest of.

He entered a low drinking-saloon, and ordered a glass of liquor, partly to gratify his taste, partly that while drinking he might have leisure to look about him.

It was a low, square room, dark and unsightly, frequented evidently by the lowest ranks only. At this time there was but one man present besides Randall.

This man was tall, low-browed, with shaggy, black eyebrows, and a face on which villainy was stamped in Nature's plainest and most ineffaceable characters.

"There's a man," thought the mate, "that will serve my

turn, and, to judge from his looks, will be troubled by no unnecessary scruples on the subject."

Meanwhile, the other, lifting his eyes from the glass, had observed Randall's close scrutiny, and chose to take offense at it. He rose from his seat, and, advancing toward Randall, observed, in a menacing tone:

"It appears to me, señor, that you are impertinent."

Randall understood the language in which this was spoken, and coolly inquired:

"How so?"

"You have been staring at me as if you had some particular object in it."

"So I have," returned the mate, in the same tone as before.

"Explain yourself señor, and if, as I mistrust, you mean to insult me, I will make you better acquainted with my good knife," and he tapped the knife significantly.

"It is an acquaintance which I do not court," said Randall, shrugging his shoulders. "But it appears to me that it is not well talking without something to moisten the throat. I shall be happy to have you drink with me."

"I beg your pardon, señor, for my suspicions, which, I see, were wrong. I see that you are a gentleman. Henceforth I will treat you as such."

"I thought you would learn to know me better," said Randall, filling both glasses; "let me drink to our better acquaintance."

Both sat down very amicably. The glass had made them friends.

"I should like to ask your advice on a certain point," said Randall.

"I will give it with pleasure."

"I have an enemy—a deadly foe—whom I detest. What would you do if you were in my place?"

"You say he is your deadly foe?"

"Yes."

"I would give him a passport to another world. That is my advice."

"And you would feel no compunctions?"

"No more than if I were crushing a spider."

"I will own, then," said Randall, "that I have thought of this, but it is difficult for me to act in the matter."

"Then hire another to do it."

"Ah, if I could only find some brave man who would undertake the job."

"Well?"

"I would engage him to do it for me, if——"

"Well?"

"If we could agree upon the terms."

"You need seek no farther for your man, then," said the stranger, gulping down another glass.

"How is that?" asked Randall, pretending not to understand him fully.

"Because you see before you one who is willing to undertake it."

"You?"

"And why not?"

"Certainly, there is no good reason."

"Now tell me about it."

"First, let us settle about the price to be paid."

"As you please."

After some little discussion this was finally fixed at sixty dollars. For this paltry sum, added to the booty which he might find upon the person of his victim, this miserable man was willing to commit one of the worst of crimes.

"Now," continued the mate, "I must give you some directions which will enable you to identify the person."

"Is he a sailor?"

"He is."

"On board what ship?"

"The *Bouncing Betsy.*"

"Lying where?"

Randall indicated the wharf at which the vessel was moored.

"Now describe the man."

"He is rather below the common height, broad-shouldered, extraordinarily strong; in fact, such a Hercules that it will be well for you to take him by surprise."

"This will make me equal with him," said the Brazilian, displaying his knife.

"That and the darkness."

"When shall I be likely to meet him?"

"He will receive permission to come on shore to-morrow

night," said Randall. "You must be hovering about the vessel, and watch the sailors as they come from the shore. When you see him, you will follow him."

"Trust me for that."

"And when all is over, and you furnish me evidence that you have done the deed, the money shall be yours."

"I require a portion in advance. How do I know but you will play me false?"

"My good friend, I should expect, in that case, to become your victim. However, your request is reasonable. You shall have one-third of the sum stipulated in advance."

He placed twenty dollars in the hands of his companion, and, rising, paid his score. He then betook himself to the ship, and, on the arrival of Captain Brace, acquainted him with the result of his visit. The latter expressed great satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Bill Sturdy and Charlie were speaking of the plan they had in view—that of escaping from the ship.

"Suppose," said Charlie, "we cannot obtain permission to go on shore together."

"Then I will come to the wharf at midnight, and you can leave your bunk unobserved and join me."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PASS OF DEATH.

"Have I permission to go on shore, Captain Brace?" inquired Bill Sturdy on the following morning.

"I shall require your services on board during the day," said the captain, acting in accordance with the suggestion and arrangements of the mate. "At nightfall you can go if you like."

Charlie, learning from Bill Sturdy, the result of his application, did not prefer a request till evening. His request was unceremoniously refused. The captain had no desire that the boy should be present at the assault upon Bill, as his presence might prevent the attack being made, and its success, in consequence of Sturdy's great strength, depended on its unexpectedness.

"Never mind," said Bill, in a low voice, "wait till midnight. Meanwhile, I will be seeking out a proper place of concealment. When the cathedral clock strikes midnight, rise quietly and take a bundle of clothes, if you can do it unobserved, and jump upon the wharf. I will be waiting for you."

Cheered by this hope, Charlie was content to wait.

He went below, and opening his chest, put together in a bundle the clothes which he had on when he went

on board the vessel for the first time. His little preparation having now been made, he sat down and commenced a letter to his mother which it was his purpose to mail in the city, to be completed when the result of his attempt to escape should be known.

We must now follow the movements of the villain with whom Randall had conferred. He had no idea of failing to carry out his part of the contract. Aside from the pecuniary inducement, his savage temper and utter want of principle, made him rather court such adventures, even for their own sake. Just before nightfall he stationed himself at a point on the wharf where he would have an opportunity of observing all who went on board the vessel.

With his keen eyes he scrutinized the forms of the sailors with a view of verifying Randall's description, and so picking out the one who was destined to be his victim. Circumstances conspired to lead him to a wrong conclusion upon this point.

Bill Sturdy, was, at that time, below, making preparations to go on shore. It has already been remarked, that previous to Bill's enrolment among the crew, Antonio had been, physically, the most powerful among them. Although inferior to Bill Sturdy, yet he possessed a formidable amount of strength, and on board most vessels might have challenged comparison with any. But if Antonio was one in a hundred, Sturdy was one in a thousand.

Antonio was, in form, not altogether unlike Bill Sturdy. At all events, the resemblance was so great that the mate's description of Sturdy might easily be supposed to apply to him. Hence, when the Brazilian cast a scrutinizing glance over the persons of the crew, he at once selected Antonio as the one intended.

"That is the fellow," he muttered. "He looks powerful, but my good knife will prevent his being dangerous to me, provided I steal upon him from behind, and give him one sharp, decisive blow."

Bill Sturdy was not the only one permitted to go on shore that evening. Several others had similar permission extended to them, leaving behind only enough to keep the proper watch on board the vessel.

A company, including Antonio, left the vessel together some five minutes before Bill Sturdy made his appearance. The Brazilian, fixing his attention upon Antonio, followed them at a little distance, cautiously avoiding the appearance of doing so, lest he might attract observation. He did not expect to carry out his design at present, partly because it was not yet dark, and partly also because he wished to wait till Antonio was alone. He was resolved to keep him in view, for hours, if need be, until a favorable opportunity should present itself for the commission of the crime he meditated.

The first place which the men visited was a low drinking-saloon, situated on a street considered hardly

reputable. It was not long before they became noisy and drunk.

One by one they staggered out of the drinking-saloon. Among the last to go was Antonio. He had probably drank more than any of his comrades, but he had a strong head, and showed his potations less in his gait than many of the rest. He walked out with a steady step, somewhat to the disappointment of the Brazilian, who had been keeping vigilant guard, and relied upon the effects of the liquor to make him an easier conquest.

It was already dark, but the street was too public, and he would be too liable to interruption and detection to make it prudent to attack at present. He, therefore, cautiously followed Antonio, hoping that he would presently turn into some narrow lane or alley.

In this hope he was not disappointed. At a little distance there was a narrow alley leading from the street in which Antonio was now walking to another of equal size. Antonio stood a little doubtful at the entrance, but finally entered. If he had only known that there was one close upon his heels who was tracking him with the keenness of an Indian he might have hesitated before entering what, to him, was destined to prove "the pass of death."

The alley was a long one, little frequented at that hour, and unlighted. Cautiously behind the doomed sailor walked the hired assassin. And now Antonio is nearly midway. Between them there is a distance of fifty feet.

Over this interval creeps the murderer with noiseless feet. Then, snatching the ever-ready knife from his girdle, he lifts his hand, and the descending knife is buried in the back of Antonio, entering just below the neck. He sank to the ground with a convulsive shudder, and a sharp cry of pain.

The Brazilian stood over him. Antonio looked up into his face, supposing it might be Bill Sturdy, whose enmity he judged by his own.

Half-lifting himself from the ground with his last remaining strength, he ejaculated feebly, "Were you hired to do this?"

"I was," said the assassin.

Antonio could have but one thought as to the one who had instigated the murder. He was satisfied it was Bill, and that thought made death doubly bitter.

Quickly stripping his victim of whatever he had about him worth taking, his murderer crept away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHARLIE'S ESCAPE.

Randall had made an appointment to meet his agent at midnight at the place where they originally met.

Some ten minutes before the hour he entered, and found the Brazilian seated at a table with a bottle before him.

"I am here first," said the latter nonchalantly, as he laid down a glass which he had drained.

"So it seems," said Randall. "And now, what success?" he asked eagerly.

"The best."

"You have——"

"I have earned my reward."

"Good!" exclaimed the mate, his eyes flashing with revengeful malice.

"And now," said the assassin coolly, "I am ready to receive my pay."

"You shall have it as soon as you prove to me that you have stated the truth."

"Do you dare to doubt my word?" said the Brazilian fiercely.

"Not at all."

"Why, then, do you demand this proof? Have I not told you?"

"Because," said Randall, "you must know, that in this matter I am the agent of another, and that the money with which I pay you is not mine, but only what he has intrusted to me."

"Well?"

"You will easily understand that, though I may be perfectly satisfied with your assurance, he is a different person. He has never met you, and may very reasonably require some proof that the deed has been done."

"Would you know the hair of this man?" asked the Brazilian.

"I should."

The murderer drew from his bosom a lock of hair which he had severed from the head of his victim.

Randall looked at it eagerly, turned pale, and uttered an exclamation of mingled surprise and dismay.

"You have made a great mistake," he said.

"A mistake!" echoed the other.

"Yes," said Randall; "you must have killed the wrong man!"

"What makes you think so?"

"Because the hair should be sandy. This is black."

"Beware," said the assassin suspiciously, "how you attempt to trick me out of my reward. The knife which has drunk the blood of one can, on occasion, do the same thing for another."

"Your suspicions are unjust," said the mate. "In any event, you are welcome to what you have already received, and we must enter upon a new contract for the other."

"Umph!" muttered his companion, only half-appeased.

"And now let us go and see who has been the victim of this unlucky mistake."

Together they proceeded cautiously to the alley where the sailor yet lay, cold and rigid, his face wearing the look of dark, sullen hatred and ferocity which had been habitual to it in life.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Randall. "This is Antonio."

"Is it not the man you intended?"

"No; it is his deadly foe. But what a fearful look he wears in death. Was there any struggle?"

"No; he had no chance."

"You did not kill him instantly?"

"He had time to ask a question."

"What was it?"

"He asked if I had been hired to murder him."

"And you answered——"

"Yes."

"Did you tell him by whom you were hired?"

"I had no opportunity. He had just strength to ask the question, and then died."

"He supposed it to be another," said Randall. But it can't be helped, and we may as well leave this place,

or we may incur suspicion. I don't know that I care much for the mistake. He was an ugly fellow."

"About the other?"

"If you will be on the wharf to-morrow morning, I will take care that the man is on deck. You could not fail to recognize him, but to avoid all mistake, I will go forward and speak to him."

"And am I to receive no more than twenty dollars for what I have already done?" asked the Brazilian discontentedly.

"Did you take nothing from the corpse?"

The assassin had found considerable money, and the thought of this tended to appease him.

"You are welcome to that, whatever it is, and for the new enterprise you shall have as much as I promised in the first place. You see, therefore, that you will be a gainer by the mistake that has taken place, while I shall not be out of pocket by it."

"You said you were but an agent."

"So I am, but this money will come from me."

Here the two villains parted company, one betaking himself to his ship, the other returning to the drinking-saloon, where he spent the remainder of the night in drunken revelry.

In the meantime, the man against whose life Randall had plotted unsuccessfully was preparing another disappointment for the mate.

On leaving the ship, not dreaming how important to

him had been the ten minutes by which his comrades had preceded him, Bill Sturdy struck for the central part of the city by the most direct route.

Turning a corner, he unexpectedly fell in with a sailor who had been a messmate on a former voyage. Bill ascertained that his comrade was about to sail in two days for Liverpool, and from thence to New York.

"Can your captain take another hand?" asked Sturdy.

"I have no doubt he would like one, for we are short-handed. We lost a sailor overboard just before we got into Rio."

"Do you carry any passengers?"

"A few."

"I shall want to secure a berth for one."

"You don't mean to say, Bill, that you've been spliced?"

"Not quite so bad as that. The passenger is a boy."

"A son of yours?"

"I wish he was," said Bill earnestly; "but I'll tell you more about this matter another time. For the present, keep dark. And that reminds me, can you tell me of any quiet, decent place where the lad and I can come to anchor?"

"I know of a widow who will give you good rooms."

Bill took the address, and toward twelve o'clock he returned to the wharf at which the vessel was lying. While he was standing in the shadow of a large building the cathedral clock struck twelve.

A moment after a youthful form appeared upon deck, descended the side swiftly, and stepped on the wharf.

"Here I am, my lad," said Sturdy, in a low voice, coming out from his place of concealment.

"I was afraid you wouldn't be here," whispered Charlie.

"Trust me for that. And now we must be making sail, or the pirates will be after us."

And this is the way Charlie took leave of the *Bouncing Betsy,* and we will not attempt to depict the rage and vexation of Randall and the captain when they ascertained that Bill Sturdy had made his escape from the vessel and taken Charlie with him. For they entertained no doubt from the previous intimacy of the two that they had deserted the ship in company. They instituted as strict a search as they were able, and even offered a reward to any of the crew who should be instrumental in bringing back either, but particularly the boy. None of the sailors, however, would have betrayed Charlie, even if they had had the opportunity. Captain Brace was finally obliged to put to sea without those whom he was so desirous of getting back into his power. He was compelled at the last to ship two new hands in place of Bill Sturdy and Antonio.

As for Bill Sturdy, he embarked on the Liverpool-bound vessel. He was desirous that Charlie should go as passenger, offering to pay his fare, that he might be spared the hardships of a boy on board ship. But to this arrangement Charlie strongly objected. He said he had no intention of being idle, and as to the hardships, he was willing

to encounter them. Bill, therefore, withdrew his objections, and Charlie became one of the crew. He soon became a favorite, and as the captain and mate were quite different in character and disposition from those of the *Bouncing Betsy*, his voyage proved much more pleasant and satisfactory.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FIRST LESSONS.

It will be remembered that Mrs. Codman, after the abduction of her son, was successful in obtaining the post of governess to a rather playful and mischievous young lady, the only daughter of a wealthy merchant named Bowman.

Mrs. Codman found her pupil as playful as a kitten, and about as fond of study. To confess the truth, Miss Bert Bowman was deplorably ignorant for a young lady of her age. Her governess, however, soon ascertained that it was from no want of natural capacity, but rather because she had been so much indulged that nothing had been required of her beyond what the young lady chose to perform, and that was exceedingly little. In a private conversation with Mrs. Codman, Mr. Bowman explained the deficiencies of Bert with their cause, and went on to say:

"Now, my dear madam, I wish to surrender Bert to your charge entirely. I feel assured that I may rely upon your judgment to adopt such a course as may be best adapted to reconcile her to study, of which, at present, she has a great dread. I would not counsel too great strictness at first, though I do not apprehend that from you. Neither perhaps ought we to try to advance very rapidly at first.

Step by step, will be the most judicious way. In regard to hours, text-books, and studies generally, you will do as you think best."

"I thank you, Mr. Bowman," replied Mrs. Codman, "for your dependence on my judgment, and hope to deserve it. I hope my young pupil, who, I am convinced is not wanting in intelligence, will do justice to her natural capacity."

The next day Mrs. Codman commenced her undertaking, for such it may be appropriately called.

"Bertha," said she, pointing to the clock, "it is nine o'clock. Suppose we commence our studies."

"Just let me have another race with Topsy," said Bert, who was flying round the room in pursuit of the black kitten, who was evidently regarded by her young mistress as a congenial companion.

"I'm afraid I must say no, my dear child," said Mrs. Codman gently; "there is nothing like punctuality. So if you will just ring the bell, I will ask Jane to take away Topsy for the present."

"Can't Topsy come to school with me?" asked Bert, disappointed.

"I'm afraid if she did my other pupil would not make very much progress."

Bert unwillingly acquiesced in the dismission of her favorite companion.

"You won't keep me as long as they do in school, will you, Mrs. Codman?" asked Bert. "If I had to study four or six hours, I should certainly go into a fit."

"I dare say you would," replied her teacher, smiling. "Therefore I shall not keep you so long. In fact, as you are the only scholar, we shall not bind ourselves to so many hours, but rather to so much learned, so that it will depend a good deal on how well you study."

"That's good," said Bert. "Only, Mrs. Codman, you mustn't be too hard upon me. I don't believe I can get very long lessons."

"I mean to be quite easy at first. I shall not ask much, but that little I shall be strict in requiring."

Bert wasn't quite sure how she liked the latter part of this remark.

"Before setting you any lessons, I must find out how much you know."

"I guess it won't take me long to tell you all I ever learned."

"Here is a reading-book. Let me hear you read."

Bert took the book, and stumbled through a paragraph, invariably mispronouncing all words of over one syllable.

"There," said she, taking a long breath; "I'm glad that is over."

"Now," said Mrs. Codman, taking the book, "let me read it aloud."

She was an excellent reader, and Bert, though she could not read well herself, recognized the fact.

"I wish I could read as well as that," said Bert. "How awfully you must have studied when you were a girl."

"Not so hard as you think, perhaps," said her teacher,

smiling. "Success depends more upon a series of small efforts than upon any great one."

"Do you think I shall ever read well?" asked Bert doubtfully.

"I am sure you will, if you will give a moderate amount of attention. Do you know anything of arithmetic?"

"Do you mean the multiplication table?"

"Yes, that is a part of it."

"Yes," said Bert, "I know some lines about it. Charlie Morrill taught me them one day."

"What are they?"

Bert repeated the following lines:

"Multiplication is vexation,
Division is as bad.
The rule of Three doth trouble me,
And Practise makes me mad.

Mrs. Codman smiled.

"Perhaps you will like them better as you grow better acquainted," she said. "Can you tell me how much are four times four?"

Bert went through a variety of motions in counting her fingers, and finally announced as the result of her computation, that four times four made twenty-nine.

"That is hardly right."

"I'm awful ignorant, ain't I?" asked Bert.

"Considerably so, I confess. But we shall be able to remedy that."

"You won't make me study my eyes out?"

"That would be a pity. You see mine are not yet gone,

and I don't mean to ask you to study any harder than I did."

Bert looked at the eyes of her teacher which were quite as bright as her own, and lost her apprehensions on that score.

"I'll tell you why I asked," said she, after a pause. "There's a girl that goes to school—she's only twelve years old—and she has to wear spectacles, and I heard somebody say it was because she studied so hard. I shouldn't want to be obliged to wear spectacles."

Mrs. Codman could not forbear laughing at the idea of her frolicsome little scholar, with a pair of glasses perched upon her nose, and promised her that if she found there was any prospect of her being obliged to wear them, she would advise at once giving up study.

"Then I hope," thought Bert, "I shall need them soon."

"Now," proceeded Mrs. Codman, "I am going to give you short and easy lessons in reading, spelling, and arithmetic. It won't take you long to get them, if you only try. When you have recited them, we are to go out and ride in the carriage."

"Oh, that will be nice," exclaimed the child. "Tell me what the lesson is, quick."

The lessons were got and said sooner than could have been expected, and so Bert had taken the first step in ascending the hill of learning.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LETTER FROM CHARLIE.

Bert had plenty of capacity. She could get her lessons in an incredibly short time when there was any inducement. At other times she would sit for two or three hours with the book before her, but with her attention straying to other things, and, as a natural consequence, would know no more at the end of that time than at the beginning. Fortunately Mrs. Codman had the gift of patience, and though she was gentle, was, at the same time, firm.

Of one thing Bert became convinced—that study was not so terrible as she had imagined. At the end of three months she had made so great an improvement, that her father was equally surprised and delighted, and was disposed to do full justice to Mrs. Codman's merits as a governess.

"Who knows but you will become quite a learned lady in time, Bert?" he said playfully.

"No doubt of it, papa," replied Bert. "By the time I am eighteen, I expect to wear green glasses and write books."

"That will, indeed, be a miraculous transformation. And what is to become of Topsy, then?"

"Oh, she'll be an old cat then, and won't feel any more like racing round than I do. She'll just curl up in a chair beside me, and I will use her fur to wipe my pens on. She is just the right color for that, you know."

"Quite a sensible plan, I confess. Indeed, it will be well for you to have something of that kind to be employed about, as you will probably have no beaux."

"No beaux, papa? And why am I to have no beaux, I should like to know?"

"Because it takes two to make a bargain."

"Well, perhaps I sha'n't," replied Bert, tossing her head. "Perhaps you don't know that I have picked out my future husband."

"Whew! That is getting along faster than I had anticipated. May I be permitted to know who is to be my son-in-law? I think I can guess, however."

"Who?"

"Mr. Bradley."

Mr. Bradley was a bachelor, of about fifty, partially bald and more than partially homely, who had now and then dined with Mr. Bowman, and had taken more notice of the young lady than she at all desired.

"Mr. Bradley!" repeated Bert, in a contemptuous manner. "I'd a good deal rather marry Topsy."

"Perhaps," suggested her father, "the superior length

of the kitten's whiskers causes you to give her the preference. Am I to understand that she is your choice?"

"No; it is a very handsome boy, and his name is Charlie Codman."

A look of regret stole over Mrs. Codman's face—the expression of a sorrow caused by her uncertainty with regard to Charlie's fate.

"A son of yours?" asked Mr. Bowman, in some surprise.

Mrs. Codman replied in the affirmative.

"You ought to see his miniature, papa. He is very handsome."

"And you have lost your heart to him. Perhaps he may not return the compliment."

"I hope he will," said the young lady.

"Perhaps Mrs. Codman will allow me to look at the miniature of my future son-in-law," said Mr. Bowman, not guessing the mother's sorrow and its cause.

While Mrs. Codman was absent from the room, Bert gave her father a brief account of Charlie's disappearance.

"You must pardon me, Mrs. Codman," said Mr. Bowman, when she had returned, "for speaking in the lively tone I did. I little guessed the anxiety you must feel about your son. Is this the miniature? A very attractive face. I don't wonder at Bert's taking a fancy to it. I cannot wonder at your sorrow in losing, even for a time, such a boy as this face seems to indicate."

"You think there is a chance of his coming back to me?" asked Mrs. Codman anxiously.

"I am hardly prepared to express an opinion on the scanty information which Bert has been able to give me. If you are willing to tell me the story in detail, I will tell you what I think of the chances."

Mrs. Codman told the story, mentioning also the name of Peter Manson, and the language which he had used.

"I sometimes see this Manson," said the merchant, "and know him by reputation. He is a miser."

"He pretends to be very poor."

"All pretense. I do not see what object he could have had in spiriting your son away."

Further conversation followed, but, as might be expected, no satisfactory result was reached. Mrs. Codman, however, felt relieved and more hopeful in the knowledge that her employer knew of her loss, and would do what he could to discover Charlie.

It was only a week later that the gentleman came into the school-room with a smile upon his face.

"Father, you bring good news; isn't it so?" said Bert.

"I hope so."

Mrs. Codman looked up with a glance of eager inquiry.

"As I took up the morning paper," said the merchant, "my eyes, by chance, ran down the list of advertised letters. Recognizing the name of Mrs. Codman among them, I took the liberty of sending to the office for it. It is post-marked at Rio Janeiro."

"Oh, give it to me quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Codman, in agitation.

"Is it from Charlie?" asked Bert.

"It is, it is!" exclaimed the happy mother, as she recognized the familiar handwriting; and, tearing open the letter, she devoured the contents.

It was the letter which Charlie had commenced on shipboard, and it read:

"DEAREST MOTHER: I hope this letter will reach you in safety, and will relieve you of some of the anxiety you must have felt about your wandering boy. You will start with surprise when you see where this is dated. I am three thousand miles from you, dear mother, but not by my own act. But I must tell you how I came to leave you. (This portion of the letter is omitted.) You mustn't think I have suffered all the time on board the ship, though it is hard work, and, for some reason, the captain and mate have both been my enemies.

"I have had one faithful friend, to whom I am very much indebted. He is a rough sailor, and neither educated nor refined, but he has a warm heart, and has been very kind to your boy. Indeed, mother, I don't know how much trouble I should have had, if it hadn't been for honest Bill Sturdy. Some time I hope you will have the pleasure of taking him by the hand, and thanking him for all he has done for me. The greatest act of friendship for which I have to thank him I will not write here, but I will tell you some time.

"As we were neither of us treated as well as we ought to be, we have deserted the vessel, and transferred ourselves to a ship bound to Liverpool, and thence to New York; so that it may be some months from now before I see you again.

"I am so afraid you have suffered since I left you, not only from solitude and anxiety about me, but have been compelled to labor beyond your strength. You were so poorly paid for that horrid sewing, and had to work so hard at it. But when I come back we will live together, as we once did; and though it will not be a luxurious home, it shall be a happy one. As you may have moved elsewhere, you must leave word with those who occupy our old room where you live, so that when I come back, which will be just as soon as I can, I may come at once to you, and tell you how much I have missed you. From your affectionate son, CHARLIE."

Knowing that Mr. Bowman felt a friendly interest in Charlie's welfare, Mrs. Codman, her eyes dim with happy tears, handed him the letter, which he read attentively.

"A very good letter," he said, "and very creditable to the writer. When he returns, if you and he are both willing, I will receive him at once into my office. His letter is sufficient recommendation."

How differently the world looks according to the mood in which we view it. No one could have convinced Mrs. Codman, after the reception of this letter, that it was not a perfect paradise. The patient sorrow which her face

had worn the day before, gave place to a sweet and happy expression, which made her look quite charming.

"Mrs. Codman is really a beautiful woman," thought Mr. Bowman, as, unobserved, he watched her laughing with Bert, glancing over the newspaper which he was supposed to be reading.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RETURN OF THE "BETSY."

It was a fine morning when the *Bouncing Betsy,* after a quick and prosperous voyage, entered Boston harbor. There had been few or no changes on board since the ship left Rio Janeiro on the passage out. Captain Brace was still in command, and unfortunately had not at all mended his ways, but had richly merited, as he had obtained, the general dislike of the crew, not one of whom would sail with him again unless forced by dire necessity. Second in odium, as he was in command, came Randall, the mate. He cared little how he was regarded by the men under him. To him the voyage had proved in some respects a disappointment. He had not recovered from the vexation occasioned by the escape of Bill Sturdy and Charlie. He had anticipated with eagerness the return to Boston, where he hoped first to meet with the deserters, and secondly, he intended to wrest a further sum from Peter Manson.

Before visiting the miser, however, it was his intention to find out what he could about Mrs. Codman, and how she had fared. He hoped in his vindictiveness she had

been reduced to the deepest distress, and the hardest shifts to procure a livelihood.

He made his way to the tenement-house where Mrs. Codman formerly lodged. He went up to the door of her former room and knocked, but it was opened by a stranger, who could give him no information about the person for whom he inquired.

Perplexed and quite at a loss how to obtain a clue to the knowledge he desired, he went back to Washington Street, and mingled in the busy throng that crowded the sidewalks. He walked leisurely along, gazing listlessly into the shop windows, but intent upon his own thoughts.

Chancing to let his eyes rest upon a passing carriage, he was startled by the glimpse of a face which he was sure he knew. It was an elegant carriage, drawn by two spirited horses, and evidently the equipage of a person of wealth. A negro coachman in livery sat upon the box, and wielded the reins with a dexterous hand. There were two persons inside—one was a child of ten, who was talking in an animated strain to a lady with a beautiful and expressive face, who sat beside her.

These two persons were Bert and her governess. The latter was looking better than when she was introduced to the reader. Surrounded by comforts and luxuries, and above all relieved from her most pressing anxiety by the letter which she had received from Charlie, her cheeks had recovered their wonted fullness and bloom, and the

rare beauty for which she had been distinguished in her youth.

Randall could scarcely believe his eyes. This was the woman whom he had pictured to himself as struggling amid the deepest poverty to obtain a scanty subsistence, worn out by harrowing anxiety for the loss of her only son. What a contrast to his anticipations was the reality! He saw her tastefully dressed—the picture of health and happiness—with the same beauty that had dazzled him in times past, surrounded by evidences of prosperity and luxury.

"What can it mean?" he thought in bewilderment. "Is it possible that my eyes are deceived by an accidental resemblance?"

The carriage had already passed him, but as it was obliged to proceed slowly on account of a press of traffic, he had no difficulty, by quickening his pace a little, in overtaking it, and again scanning the face whose presence there had filled him with so much surprise.

The first explanation which suggested itself to him as possible was, that Mrs. Codman had attracted the attention of some wealthy gentleman, who forgetting the distance which circumstances had established between them, had laid himself and his fortune at her feet. But even then how could she appear so light-hearted and happy unless Charlie had returned? There was another supposition that old Peter Manson had died, and on his death-bed, repenting his past wickedness and injustice,

had repaired the wrong of which he had been guilty, as far as he could, by leaving all his possessions to Mrs. Codman. This was to Randall the most disagreeable supposition of the two, for it would effectually stand in the way of the designs which he cherished against the same property.

Determined not to lose sight of Mrs. Codman, he with considerable difficulty kept pace with the carriage. It chanced that Bert and her governess were just returning from a drive, otherwise they might have led Randall a long chase. At present they were not very far from home.

From the opposite side of the street Randall watched them descend the steps of the carriage and enter the house. He paused long enough afterward to cross the street, note down the name of Bowman together with the number, that he might be able to identify it hereafter. He then examined the house itself with some curiosity. The appearance of the house indicated clearly enough the wealth of the owner.

"I wish I knew," muttered the mate, "on what footing Mrs. Codman resides here. She must either be the wife of the proprietor or his housekeeper, one or the other."

At this moment an infirm old woman limped out of the side-gate, with a basket slung on her arm.

Pressing forward, he accosted her.

"You seem heavily laden, my good woman."

"Yes," said she, "thanks to the good lady who lives in the house."

"What is her name?"

"It's Mrs. Codman. Do you know her, sir?"

"I am not sure. I once knew some one of the name. But there is a different name on the door—Bowman."

"Yes, he is the gentleman of the house."

"And Mrs. Codman?"

"She is the young lady's governess."

"How long has she been there?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Never mind. It doesn't matter much."

"I wish I could tell you, sir."

"It's of no consequence at all, and you needn't mention that any questions have been asked you. But I am afraid I have been detaining you. Here is something to pay you for your trouble."

So saying, he slipped half a dollar into her hand and, avoiding her profuse thanks, walked hastily away.

"Now, for a visit to the miser," he said to himself

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHARLIE TURNS UP UNEXPECTEDLY.

There was but little variety in the monotonous life of Peter Manson. His life was one struggle for money, which seemed to be the end and aim of his existence. But what did he propose to do with it all? He was not an old man yet, but all the infirmities of age were upon him.

Peter had not forgotten nor ceased to lament the heavy draft which had been made upon him by Randall. The thousands which he had left could not compensate him for the one he had lost. So, in the hope of making it up, he strove to live even more economically than before, if, indeed, that were possible. The additional privations to which he subjected himself began to tell upon the old man's constitution. He grew thinner and weaker and more shriveled than before, and all this to save a penny or two additional each day.

As Peter was crawling feebly along toward his gloomy den one afternoon, clad in the invariable blue cloak, he was startled by hearing a hoarse voice behind him, calling out:

"Peter Manson—Peter, I say!"

"Who calls?" asked Peter, in a quavering voice, slowly turning round.

"Don't you remember me?" asked Randall, for it was he.

Peter muttered something unintelligible as he cast a terrified glance at the mate, and quickened his pace.

"You're not very polite, Peter," said the other, quickly overtaking and joining the old man. "Is this the way to greet an old friend whom you have not seen for nearly a year?"

Peter looked anxious and alarmed, and glanced askance at his companion.

By this time they had reached the miser's quarters, and Peter, taking out a key, opened the door. He opened it just sufficiently to admit himself, and was then about to close it when Randall, unceremoniously pushing him aside, entered also.

"By your leave, Peter, I will spend a short time with you."

"I have no fire," said Peter Manson hastily.

"I dare say not," said Randall carelessly, "but you can easily kindle one."

"I—I have no fuel."

"None at all?"

"Why, a little—a very little," stammered Peter uneasily.

"I thought so. Come, lead the way. I won't trouble you to light the fire. I'll do it myself."

With something that sounded like a groan, the old man

led the way, and ushered his unwelcome guest into his room.

Randall used as much wood in kindling a fire as would have lasted Peter a whole day.

"You will ruin me," he said, in dismay.

"Then you'll be ruined in a good cause," said Randall. "But I say, Peter, don't you remember what we talked about when I visited you last?"

The old man groaned, thinking of the thousand dollars.

"Seems to me it has not left a very agreeable impression upon your mind," remarked his companion. "Don't you want me to tell you of the boy that I spirited away?"

"Is he dead?" asked Peter eagerly.

"No; curse him, he escaped from me."

"You—you didn't let him know about the money?"

"Which you feloniously kept from him? Was that what you mean?"

"Ye—yes."

"No, I didn't."

Peter looked relieved.

"Where is he now?"

"Heaven knows! I don't. He deserted from the ship at Rio Janeiro. But let me ask you, in turn, Peter, what has become of the mother, whom each of us has so much reason to hate?"

"I don't know."

"Then she is no longer a tenant of yours?"

"She moved in less than a month after you went away."

"Couldn't pay her rent?"

"Yes; she paid it as long as she stayed. I have not seen or heard anything of her since."

"I have," said the mate significantly.

"You!" exclaimed Peter eagerly.

"I saw her to-day."

"How—where?"

"In a carriage."

"A carriage!" echoed Peter, in surprise.

"Yes; looking as bright and handsome as when she rejected you with scorn."

The miser frowned.

"Where did you meet her?"

"On Washington Street. I was walking there when I chanced to look into a gay carriage that was driving by, and saw her."

"Are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"No. I followed her to her place of residence."

"Where is it?"

"No. —— Mt. Vernon Street."

"She must be rich, then."

"No; she is a governess there, though enjoying, I should think, unusual privileges, and is, no doubt, happy."

Peter made no reply, but seemed occupied by other thoughts.

"And now, Peter, have you any idea what I came for?"

"To tell me this."

"I am not fool enough to take all this trouble."

"Then I don't know."

"I want money, Peter."

Peter could not be said to change color, but he grew more ghastly than before, at this demand.

"I have nothing to give you," he said.

"Tell that to the marines. You must give me another thousand dollars."

"Another thouand dollars!" exclaimed the old man. "Where do you think I should get it? Did I not impoverish myself in satisfying your last demand, and have I not been obliged to live on bread and water since?"

Randall shrugged his shoulders.

"I dare say you have lived on bread and water, but as to being obliged to, that is nonsense. I ask you again to give me a thousand dollars. You will have thousands left."

"I shall be a beggar," said the old man passionately.

"A beggar!" returned Randall, laughing scornfully.

"Yes," said Peter with energy. "You promised when I gave you a thousand dollars"—his voice faltered as he recalled the sacrifice—"that you would ask no more. Now, you come back for another sum as large, and it is not yet a year. You shall not have it! Not if I had it fifty times over."

"Bethink you what you are saying, old man," said Randall menacingly. "Do you know that I can go to Mrs. Codman, and denounce you?"

"You will not," said Peter, trembling.

"But I will, unless you comply with my demand. Now what do you say? Better be reasonable, and consent, before I compel you."

"Never!" exclaimed the miser desperately.

"I will denounce you to the police. Shall I have the money?"

But Peter was no longer to be moved, even by his fears. His love of money overcame every other consideration, and again he exclaimed, "Never!" with all the energy of which he was capable.

"Is this your final answer?"

"It is."

"Then I will help myself," said Randall, coolly, leaving his chair, and beginning to lift up the trapdoor, beneath which was the miser's box of treasure.

As soon as Peter fairly comprehended his design, and saw the money in the grasp of the purloiner, unable to restrain himself, he threw himself upon the mate with a cry as of a lioness deprived of her young, and grasped the strong man by the throat with fingers, which, though naturally weak, rage and despair made strong. At all events, it was not particularly comfortable, and provoked Randall, who seized the old man in his strong arms, and, with a muttered curse, hurled him to the floor, where he lay pale and senseless.

"Confusion!" muttered Randall, in dismay, for Peter had uttered a shrill scream as he fell. "I am afraid I shall get into an ugly scrape."

He was not altogether wrong.

The scream had been heard by two, at least, who were passing. The door was burst open, and in rushed Bill Sturdy and Charlie Codman, who had just returned to Boston, and were passing on their way up from the wharf at which the vessel was lying.

"Mr. Randall!" exclaimed Charlie, in surprised recognition.

Randall strove to escape through the opened door, but Sturdy, seizing him in his powerful grasp, cried, "Not so fast, my hearty! You've been up to some mischief, and if I don't see justice done you, may I never see salt-water again!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHARLIE COMES INTO HIS FORTUNE.

Probably there were no two persons then living whom Randall at that moment cared less about seeing than Bill Sturdy and Charlie. Though astonished beyond expression to see them there, his position was too critical to allow him to waste time in giving expression to his surprise.

"Let me go, you scoundrel!" he exclaimed, making a desperate effort to elude Bill's grasp.

He might as well have striven to tear himself from the grasp of a lion.

"Not so fast, Mr. Randall," said Bill Sturdy.

"You mutinous scoundrel!" hissed the mate.

"You forget," said the captor coolly, "that we are not now on the quarter-deck. Here I am your equal, Mr. Randall, and, perhaps, you may find me a little more."

"Let me go, if you know what is best for yourself," ejaculated Randall.

"If you know what is best for yourself," said Bill composedly, "I would advise you to be quiet."

"And now," he continued, tightening his grasp a lit-

tle, "just let me know what mischief you have been up to?"

"I am not responsible to you," said Randall.

"Responsible or not, you must give an account of yourself."

"If you will let me go, I will make it worth your while."

"Do you think I am mean enough to accept a bribe?" exclaimed Sturdy, with honest indignation. "Let me know what you have been doing."

"This old man!" said Randall, curbing his pride, "foolishly thought I meant to rob him, and shrieked for assistance.

"Is that all!" asked Bill, keenly glancing at the box of coins and bank-notes. "Things look as if you were going to rob him in reality."

"I am not in the habit of thieving," said Randall.

At this moment the miser began to show signs of returning consciousness.

"Go and get some water, Charlie," said Bill. "The old man looks as if he might come to with a little help."

There was a pail half-full of water standing near-by. Charlie sprinkled Peter's face, and a moment after he gasped and opened his eyes. He cast a frightened glance from face to face till his eyes rested on Randall, when he shuddered, and cried feebly.

"Take him away, take him away! He will rob me."

"Not while I am here to prevent him," returned Bill, in a tone of assurance.

"You are friends, then?" said the miser anxiously.

"Of course we are. Did this man attempt to rob you?"

"Take care not to make any false accusations, old man," said Randall menacingly.

"Speak the truth without fear," said Bill Sturdy; "I'll bear you out in it. He can't do you any harm."

"He demanded a thousand dollars from me," said the old man, "and when I would not give it to him he was going to help himself."

"What do you say to that, Mr. Randall?" asked Sturdy.

"I say this," said the mate, turning a malignant glance upon the miser, "that it was a regular bargain—a matter of business. This man owed me the money—he knows best what for, and refused to pay it."

"I did not," said Peter hastily, "he had already been paid in full."

"Take care, Peter, or I may tell what it was for."

"I defy you," said the miser in a quavering tone of defiance. "You are a bad man."

"Perhaps you don't know who this boy is?" said Randall.

"Who is he?" asked Peter doubtfully.

"He is one who has reason to consider you his enemy," said Randall, "even more than myself."

At his unexpected statement Bill Sturdy and Charlie looked at each other in surprise.

"Do you know this old man, then, Charlie?" asked Sturdy.

"Yes; he is Mr. Manson, of whom my mother used to hire a room"

"The landlord?"

"Yes."

"And what harm has he ever done to you?"

"I don't know," said Charlie, shaking his head, "unless," and an anxious look came over his face, "he has distressed my mother for rent since I have been gone."

"Is that so?" demanded the sailor sternly.

"No, no!" said Peter Manson hastily. "She left my tenement a good many months ago."

"And where is she now?" asked Charlie eagerly, for, having just landed, he knew nothing of his mother's whereabouts.

"Then you have not seen her?" asked Randall, with the sudden thought that he might make better terms for himself by selling his knowledge on the subject.

"No," said Charlie. "Is she well? Tell me, I entreat you, if you know."

"I do know," said Randall composedly, "both where she is and how she has fared."

"Tell me quick."

"That depends upon circumstances. While I am held in custody I have little inducement to do you a favor."

"Sturdy will release you, won't you, Sturdy? Only tell me where my mother is, that I may go to her at once."

"Why," said Bill cautiously, "I don't know exactly. He may be trying a game, and giving us information that won't be worth anything."

"You can keep me here till you have sent to ascertain if I have told you the truth."

"No, no," said Peter Manson, terrified at the prospect, "don't let him stay here. He would rob me."

"Rob you," sneered Randall; "it looks well in you whose money has been dishonestly gained, to charge me with theft."

"He—you won't mind what he says, gentleman," said Peter Manson, trembling. "He only says it to spite me."

"To spit you! Yes, you old hunk, I will spite you, and that with a vengeance! Hark you, Sturdy, I have kept this old man's secret long enough, and, though I hate you, and that boy there, I believe I hate him worse. If I will reveal to this boy a secret which will insure to him a property of from twenty to thirty thousand dollars, will you agree to let me go, and give me a thousand dollars?"

"Can you do it?" demanded Sturdy, in surprise.

"I can."

"Well, it ain't for me to say, but if I were Charlie here I would close with your terms."

"Don't you believe him," said Peter, terrified. "He is only making a fool of you. He can't do what he says."

Charlie was not a little astonished at the turn affairs had taken.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Bill, "if there might be

something in this, as long as the old man seems so afraid the secret will be let out."

"You will find that I have told you the truth," said Randall; "tell me quickly, yes or no. If you decline, you will lose more than I shall."

"Then," said Charlie, "I will accept your terms so far as I am concerned."

"And I'll bear witness to it," said Bill, "if you will carry out your part of the agreement."

"That I will do to your satisfaction. The first thing to be explained is, that in carrying this boy to sea I was only acting as the agent of another."

"And that other?"

"Was Peter Manson—the man you see before you."

"It is false," said the miser, turning ghastly pale.

"Moreover," said Randall, "I was well paid for the service. I received a thousand dollars."

"Oh, oh!" cried the old man, swaying backward and forward—"a thousand dollars, and I so poor."

"You see he admits it," said Randall.

"And what did he want Charlie carried away for?"

"Reason enough for that. He feared the boy might learn that it was his wealth which he has been hoarding up."

"Mine!" exclaimed Charlie, in unbounded surprise.

"Did you never hear your mother speak of a certain Peter Thornton, who by purloining and making off with twenty thousand dollars caused your grandfather to fail?"

"Yes, often."

"*That man is Peter Thornton!*" said Randall, pointing with his finger to the miser.

The latter half-rose from his seat, and then, as if he had received a mortal wound, sank to the floor.

"You require no other confirmation of my words," said the mate.

"Why, my lad, you will be a rich man," said Bill Sturdy, his face beaming with satisfaction.

"How glad mother will be!" exclaimed Charlie. "Where is she, Mr. Randall? I want so much to see her."

The mate gave Charlie briefly the information he required, and added:

"You will probably need my assistance to establish your claim to the property of which yonder old man has so long deprived you. I shall hold myself at your service, trusting to your honor to pay me the thousand dollars agreed upon."

"You shall not trust in vain, Mr. Randall," said Charlie promptly. "Place me in possession of what is rightfully mine, and you shall have no reason to complain."

"Very well, I shall stop at the Tremont House for the present. There you or your lawyer will find me. I advise you to employ legal assistance."

"I will do so, and thank you for the suggestion. As soon as I have seen my mother I shall proceed to business."

Randall withdrew, but was quickly followed by Charlie and his friend.

"Where are you going, my lad?" asked the sailor.

"You needn't ask, Bill—to see my best friend, my mother. It is for her sake that I welcome this fortune. She shall never want any more while I have money. We will have a nice little home, where you shall be welcome, Bill, always."

Bill pressed the hand of the boy in his own rough palm, and there was a suspicious moisture about his eyes, but he said nothing.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

REUNITED AT LAST.

Mrs. Codman was sitting in a little room opening out from the breakfast-room, which had been appropriated as a sort of study by Bert and herself.

Topsy, the kitten, who had not yet attained the sobriety and demureness of old cathood, was running round after her tail.

"Oh, dear," sighed Bert, who was puzzling over a lesson in geography, "I can't study any to-day."

"Why not?" asked Mrs. Codman.

"Oh, I feel so restless."

"That isn't very unusual, is it?" asked her governess, with a smile.

"I feel more so than usual. Something is going to happen, I know."

"Something does happen every day."

"Well, you know what I mean; something out of the way. I shouldn't wonder if Charlie got home today."

"Heaven grant he may!" exclaimed his mother, fervently.

By a strange coincidence—and coincidences do sometimes happen in real life, though not quite so often, per-

haps, as in stories—Mrs. Codman had hardly given utterance to her wish when the bell rang.

Bert jumped from her seat.

"It is he, I know it is!" she exclaimed. "Do let me go to the door."

"You are very fanciful to-day, Bert," said Mrs. Codman. But she did not forbid her going. Bert's earnestness had given birth to a wild hope on her part, that it might be as she had fancied.

Before the servant had a chance to reach the door, Bert had opened it.

Bill Sturdy and Charlie stood on the steps, Charlie looking handsome and manly, with an eager look on his bright face. Sturdy, it must be owned, looked and felt a little awkward, not being accustomed to call as a visitor at houses as elegant as Mr. Bowman's.

"Oh! this is Charlie, isn't it?" exclaimed Bert, with childish delight, instinctively putting out her hand.

"What, do you know me?" asked Charlie, pleased with this cordial reception, but astonished at being recognized.

"Oh, yes."

"Is my mother here?"

"Yes; I will go and call her. But won't you come in?"

"I would rather you would call her," said Charlie bashfully.

Bert danced back into the little study.

"I was right, Mrs. Codman," said she triumphantly. "It is Charlie."

"Has he come?" asked the mother, letting fall, as she rose, the astonished kitten, which had clambered into her lap. "Oh, where is he?"

"At the door."

Mrs. Codman waited for no more, but hastened to the door, and, in a moment, the mother was face to face with her lost boy. Of the delight of that meeting; of the numberless questions which each had to ask, with what fond pride the mother noted the increased manliness of Charlie, I cannot speak in detail. Both hearts were full to overflowing with love and gratitude.

Meanwhile Bert was endeavoring, in her way, to entertain Bill Sturdy, who, though no man was braver or more self-reliant among his comrades, felt abashed in the presence of the child, whom he looked upon as made of finer clay than himself. And, indeed, the beauty and sprightliness of the girl made her look like a charming picture, and even Charlie's eyes could not help straying to her, from time to time, while he was talking with his mother.

Bill was perched upon an elegant chair, scarcely daring to rest his whole weight upon it, for fear it might give way under him, swinging his hat awkwardly in his hand.

"You are Bill Sturdy, are you not?" said Bert, determined to become better acquainted.

"How do you know that is my name?" asked Bill, half-

fancying she must have learned it in some supernatural way.

"Oh, Charlie wrote about you in his letter."

"Did his mother get a letter from him, then?"

"Yes; it was from some place with a hard name. I never can remember those geography names."

"Was it Rio Janeiro?"

"Yes; that was it. What an awful time he must have had! Do you like going to sea?"

"Yes, miss; I feel more at home on the sea than on the land."

"You do! Well, that's funny. I know I should be sea-sick, and that must be horrid."

"Well, it doesn't feel very pleasant," said Bill, with a smile.

"Oh, Mr. Sturdy, did you ever see a whale?"

"Yes, miss, plenty of them."

"I suppose you never came near being swallowed by one—like Jonah, you know?"

"No, miss; I don't think I should like that."

"What lots of adventures you must have had! You must stay to dinner, and afterward you can tell me of some."

"I don't think I could, thank you, miss, all the same," said Bill, alarmed at the suggestion. "Not but I'd be glad to spin you a yarn some time."

Just then Charlie bethought himself of his companion.

"Mother," said he, "you must let me introduce to you

my good friend, Bill Sturdy. You don't know how kind he has been to me."

"I am quite ready to believe it," said Mrs. Codman, holding out her hand kindly.

Bill took it shyly in his.

"I thank you most heartily for all you have done for my dear boy," said she.

"Anybody that wasn't a brute would have done as much, ma'am."

"Then I am afraid there are a great many brutes in the world."

Charlie stopped to dinner, but Bill could not be prevailed upon to do so. "You see, my boy," he explained to Charlie, "it don't come nat'ral; I shouldn't know how to behave. So I'll just go back to my boarding-house, and you'll find me there after dinner."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

REACHING PORT.

Will the reader imagine a year to have passed?

During this time several things have happened.

In the first place, Mr. Bowman has invited Charlie to become a member of his family.

In the second place, charmed by the beauty and grace, as well as the more valuable qualities of Mrs. Codman, with whom he has had a good chance of becoming acquainted during her residence in his family, he has invited her to become his wife. Mrs. Codman was taken by surprise, but found this proposition not altogether unwelcome. She had become attached to Bert, who added her persuasions to those of her father, and at length her governess promised to assume to her a nearer relation.

Through the testimony of Randall, the identity of Peter Manson with Peter Thornton was fully established, and the law decided that the miser's wealth must go to Charlie and his mother. It was found to exceed the estimate which had been made of it, verging close upon forty thousand dollars. Including interest for twenty years, all this, and more, belonged to those who had so long been defrauded of it.

Mrs. Codman could not help pitying the miserable and disconsolate old man, pinched with privation, which had enfeebled him, and made him old before his time. She continued to allow him the use of the old building which he had occupied so many years, and allowed him a certain sum payable on the first of every month to provide for his wants.

The sudden loss of the money which he had been hoarding up so long did not kill Peter Manson, but it affected his intellect. The habit of avarice never left him. He saved up nine-tenths of his allowance, and starved himself on the remainder. Attempts were made to remedy this by bringing him supplies of fuel and provisions, but these he economized as before. One day, when Charlie looked in to see how he was getting along, he beheld a sight which made him start back in affright.

The old man lay stretched out upon the floor with a few coins firmly clutched in his grasp. He had received a sudden summons while engaged in counting over the little money he had accumulated from his allowance.

So ended the wasted life of Peter Manson, the miser.

From him we turn to others who have figured in these pages.

Randall received the thousand dollars which had been promised as the reward of his disclosure. It appeared as if prosperity, rather than retribution, was to attend him. He succeeded in obtaining the command of a fine ship, with an excellent salary, and sailed with fair prospects.

But his tyrannical habits had not deserted him. His unjustifiable abuse aroused the deadly anger of one of the crew, a man of excitable temper, who, before he could be withheld, plunged a knife into his heart one day, just after punishment, killing him instantly.

As for Captain Brace, he, too, demands a word. Brief mention will suffice. In a fit of ungovernable rage he burst a blood-vessel and he, too, died instantly, without a moment's preparation, in which to repent of the many wrongs he had committed.

From the sad fate of these miserable men we turn gladly to brighter scenes.

Mrs. Codman, now Mrs. Bowman, has had no cause to regret her second choice. Her husband commands her respect and esteem, and makes her very happy. Charlie is now at an excellent school. After he has completed a liberal course of instruction, he will enter the office of his stepfather, where, as we cannot doubt, an honorable and useful career awaits him.

As for Bill Sturdy—honest, brave, stout-hearted Bill Sturdy—he could not be persuaded to abandon the sea, but now sails as captain of a vessel belonging to Mr. Bowman. He is unboundedly popular with his crew, whom he treats as comrades in whose welfare he is interested. Whenever he is in port, Captain Sturdy dines once with Mr. Bowman. He feels more at his ease now than when he was only a forecastle hand, but he will always be modest and unassuming. He is a prime favorite with Bert,

and always brings her home something when he returns from foreign parts.

It is not ours to read the future; but I should not be surprised, when Charlie grows to manhood, if we should find Bert's early choice of him as her husband prophetic.

So we bid farewell to Charlie Codman. His trials and struggles have come early in life, but now his bark has drifted into smoother waters. The sky above him is cloudless. His character has been strengthened by his combat with adversity. Let us hope that his manhood may redeem the promise of his youth, and be graced by all the noblest attributes of humanity.

THE END.

WHAT HE LEFT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"I know not of the truth, d'ye see,
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

MARK BROWNSON was dying, slowly, but surely, so the physician told his wife, and advised that if he had any business to settle, it should not be delayed.

"He is sinking, and even now I see his mind is, at times, a little clouded. However, I suppose there is nothing of importance that he should consider," said the doctor.

"He has made no will," said Mrs. Brownson.

"Is that necessary? I did not know—"

"I think it is very necessary, doctor, for his children's welfare. Not that I think it at all likely there can be any contest about what Mr. Brownson has. Yet to provide against any future troubles, it would be prudent, I think."

The good doctor assented, but looked much surprised.

And well he might. No one imagined old Mark Brownson had anything to will. But he was a very eccentric man; and the economical style of his establishment was likely one of his notions.

"Are you suffering much pain now, Mark?" asked Mrs. Brownson, a few moments after, when she was seated at her husband's bedside.

"Yes, yes; give me my composing draught—the opium—anything to relieve me," answered the suffering man.

His wife obeyed, and after his groaning and restlessness had ceased, she said:

"I want to talk to you, Mark. Can you listen now?"

A nodded assent gave her permission to proceed.

"Do you not think it would be as well for you to express your wishes with regard to the disposition of your stocks and other effects? You may outlive me, Mark, and this thing not be necessary, still I think it better to attend to such business," said Mrs. Brownson, closely watching the effect her words might have on the sufferer.

She had feared possibly they might shock him severely, but depending much on the favorable influence of the opiate, she had ventured on the business she considered so important.

A look of satisfaction replaced the anxiety of a moment before. She had no longer cause for fear. Calmly Mark Brownson heard her suggestion, and said, in a feeble voice:

"What have I to will?"

"Why, dear, you forget. Your long sickness and the opium—no wonder! There is the stock in the 'Liverpool Steamship Company,' and that in the 'Australian Mining Company.' Surely you have not forgotten your large amount in our State bonds? And how much you have in 'Fire and Life Insurance stock' I cannot just remember now. However, by reference to the papers I can tell."

Again she watched her husband's face. It only expressed a rather puzzled brain, as though he was trying to remember.

"You have such papers? I cannot think," he said.

"Don't try to, dear. It is not necessary. I will just look over your papers, and make a statement; and when

I read them over to you in presence of the lawyer, you can assent. You wish an equal division between myself and our daughters, I know. Is it not so?"

"Yes, yes. You are always right," murmured her husband.

"There, dear, go to sleep now. Some time when you are easy we will fix this," said Mrs. Brownson.

And the next day, at an hour when she knew her husband's mind was best prepared, a lawyer was summoned, and a statement of stocks and bonds to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars placed before him, and Mark Brownson expressed his wish to have an equal division of his effects made between his wife and two children.

The will was made, and duly signed and witnessed by two of the nearest neighbors and the only domestic, a worthy woman who had been with Mrs. Brownson for many years.

A few days more, and Mark Brownson had passed from earth.

Many wondered at the very quiet and unostentatious style of the last services for him; but the widow had said:

"In death it shall be with him as he always preferred in life."

And then when all was over, and the summer months were coming, Mrs. Brownson sold out the modest little establishment, and, with her daughters and their faithful servant, went to board by the seashore, at a very fashionable resort; but, of course, not to mingle in the gay festivities of the season, only to recruit her health, which was very much impared by long attention to her suffering husband, and to have the girls escape the heat and dust of the city.

A few days after they were settled in their new abode, Mrs. Brownson said to her attendant:

"Margaret, you were very much surprised by hearing Mr. Brownson's will."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, indeed I was."

"Well, Margaret, I do not wish you to mention anything about it down here. Mr. Brownson, you know, never let it be known to the world. And so it must be for the present. I do not wish my daughters to be married for anything but their own good qualities. They are good and beautiful enough to marry well, without having any other inducements for suitors. Now, Margaret, you know just how I feel, and what I mean?" said the anxious mother.

"Certainly I do! And I feel as much concerned about my beautiful young ladies as you do, ma'am. Never fear but I will look out for their interest," answered the worthy woman.

And to do as she said, to the best of her understanding, Margaret set out for a walk on the beach, with some of the other servants and their escorts, the waiters from the hotel. And before the next noon it was well known what a good chance there was for two young men to win as beautiful wives as ever were seen, to say nothing of the other greater attractions.

And very soon the sisters, Maud and May, were objects of universal observation. Yet it was very difficult to get an introduction, the young gentlemen all found; for the widow kept the beautiful girls very much secluded.

Numberless were the delicate attentions paid them, in the way of bouquets, books, and so on, sent by Margaret; and several cards to Mrs. Brownson, with the request for an introduction, accompanied by references—among which came those of Vernon Wadsworth and Harry Bennett.

The first one Mrs. Brownson knew well by reputation. He was a young physician of very fine promise, and, being

of one of the best families in the State, she considered him worthy of her attention. The other, she had heard since her arrival there, was the possessor of a very fair amount of worldly goods, the life-long accumulation of an old miser uncle. So, from the many aspirants, Mrs. Brownson selected these two to present to her daughters.

Just at this time, Doctor Alton, Mrs. Brownson's friend and the physician who had attended her husband, arrived at the sea-shore; and through him, without any more trouble or waiting the mother's pleasure, young Doctor Wadsworth obtained an introduction, and presented his friend, Bennett.

And although both of these young men did their best to keep back all others by various manœuvres, many more became acquainted with the lovely sisters, who soon, much to their own surprise, became decidedly the belles of that resort.

Carefully Mrs. Brownson had guarded her secret from her girls, fearing, perhaps, it would have a prejudicial effect, changing their sweet, unassuming manner, which was one of their greatest charms; or, perhaps, for other motives best known to herself.

Although Doctor Wadsworth and young Bennett very much feared the approach of other suitors, it was quite needless, for the girls were best pleased with the first who had sought them and drawn them forth from their seclusion.

The older one, Maud, a brilliant brunette, received with undisguised pleasure the devoted attention of Harry Bennett; while gentle little May, so fair and timid, always greeted the handsome doctor by a rosy flush suffusing her beautiful face; and then, from a shy, quick glance from the eyes, that had drooped at his approach, he would see the glad light that told how welcome his coming was.

"We must win them now, doctor; you see how much they are admired and sought here. What will it be when they are out of their mourning robes and in the gayeties of the city? This is our best chance. What say you?" asked young Bennett, a fortnight after their introduction.

"Say! That the very idea of even losing *sight* of that gentle, beautiful May for a day, fills my heart with misgiving and great anxiety. I tell you, I began this affair rather in fun—"

"You mean *after funds*, perhaps!" interrupted Bennett.

A flush suffused Doctor Wadsworth's face for an instant, and he answered:

"Well, I'll admit that is not at all objectionable; but really, now that I know May Brownson, I would not be willing to resign her to another man, even if she had not a dollar in the world."

There was an expression about Harry Bennett's mouth that looked as if his lips wanted to say: "I don't believe you"—only they did not just dare to. Harry Bennett was as much in love as he could be with any one other than himself, still he was not going to leap without looking. So, after learning a little more than he had already heard from Margaret, he was called, very urgently, to the city. After an absence of only two days he was back again, and stated to Doctor Wadsworth his knowledge of Mark Brownson's possessions. That evening Mrs. Brownson received proposals for both of her daughters.

She must consider the matter, and consult with her friends, the prudent mother thought and said to the anxious suitors.

This made them each more determined to secure the prize.

"Dear May, plead with your mother for me!" said the ardent young doctor.

"Mamma will consent after a while," answered the gentle girl.

"After a while! Why not now? I am going away next month for a long time. I cannot leave you, May. Would you wish me to?"

May turned pale at the thought, and raised her pleading eyes to her mother.

It was enough. Doctor Wadsworth had used the surest weapon. A separation was dreaded by both mother and daughter, and each for different reasons. And then it was an easier thing for Harry Bennett to obtain the mother's consent, to claim his love at the same time.

Mrs. Brownson, after giving her consent, requested a private interview with her prospective sons-in-law. The girls were sent from the room, and then Mrs. Brownson said:

"I have thought possibly, gentlemen, that a very foolish rumor may have reached your ears respecting the wealth possessed by my daughters, and that—excuse me, but I must allude to it—this may in a measure have influenced your selecting them from the many young girls here—"

"Oh, madam!" both men exclaimed simultaneously.

"If I tell you they have nothing but their pure hearts and loving natures, will you not be disappointed?"

"No, madam. How can you judge me so?" exclaimed both.

"I am glad it is so. I would not have you marry my daughters under false impressions."

"When May is mine, I shall think I have secured the most valuable fortune any man can have," said the doctor, with a really honest look in his eyes.

"When Maud is mine, I shall *know* I have secured a fortune I would wish," added Harry Bennett, with rather a sly twinkle in his eyes.

And so it was agreed that they should be united there, and after a very private wedding leave for an extensive bridal tour.

"The old fox! Is she not a sly one? She thought to throw us off, I do believe. But *I* am as bright as she," said Harry Bennett, after the interview.

"Really, Bennett, that is not a very respectful way of speaking of the mother of your promised wife," replied Doctor Wadsworth.

"Well, no; you are right. But just to think of her talking so to us!" answered Harry, with an air of injured pride.

The ceremony was over. After an acquaintance of less than six weeks, Doctor Wadsworth and Harry Bennett had won their wives.

And while the brides had retired to change their dress for the travelling-suit, the happy young husbands requested to speak a moment with their mother-in-law.

"Indeed *you* must speak; I will not," said Doctor Wadsworth, in a low tone, as he closed the door, and with Bennett approached Mrs. Brownson.

After a moment's hesitation, Harry Bennett said:

"Now, Mrs. Brownson, that we have proved our sincerity and real love for your daughters, there is no reason for any longer concealment."

"About what, sir?" asked his mother-in-law.

"Come, my dear madam; this is entirely useless. You have tried and proved us. Now to business."

"Really, Mr. Bennett, I am at a loss to understand you! Will you please to be explicit?"

"Well, madam, then I must tell you that I am perfectly well aware that my wife is entitled to the one-third of two hundred thousand dollars left by her father. Now, my dear madam, we are going on a very long and expensive

trip, and may need more than I have in ready money. Now, that is just the whole truth," said Harry, who had gotten over his slight embarrassment, and then spoke in a very business sort of manner.

Not so Doctor Wadsworth; he seemed very much mortified, and looked as if he wished he was away from that scene.

"Mr. Bennett, I spoke to you about this report, and told you how false it was, did I not?"

"Oh, yes, madam; but you see—"

"You still believe this, even when I again tell you that neither I nor my daughters have a dollar in the world beyond the small amount I have now from the sale of my household effects? I assure you, sir, I speak the truth," said Mrs. Brownson, in a tone and manner that would have enforced belief.

But Harry Bennett said, triumphantly:

"Madam, I have seen Mr. Brownson's will."

"*That* will, my dear sir, is not worth the paper it is written on. Mr. Brownson was out of his *head*, and *imagined* he was possessed of that sum in bonds and stock. If you can find any such possession, no one would welcome it more gladly than I. You can readily prove the truth."

Harry Bennett gazed bewildered from his mother-in-law to Doctor Wadsworth, and then said in a low voice, as if to himself:

"Caught and caged."

"And I am glad of it," exclaimed the doctor, who was truly glad of anything to end that very embarrassing interview. "Come, Bennett, we must arrange our trip to suit the extent of our purse, and be happy with the prizes we have won."

"Well, madam, I must say that the old gentleman's will

was worth something. For I'll own up now, it helped very much to secure you *one* very nice young man for your son. I'll speak a word for him, although he has been *done up to a very Brown son!* I'm ready now, Wadsworth, and we won't shorten our trip one mile; for *I've* got a fortune, thanks to my old uncle. Yes, and *another*, I'll have to admit (there she is now), thanks to her father's will."

Mrs. Brownson could not resist a smile. She had no misgivings about her children's future happiness. If they had not already secured their husbands' affection, she knew they would soon; for who could help loving such lovely girls!

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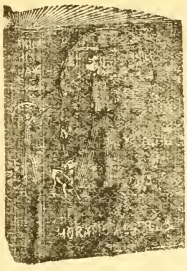

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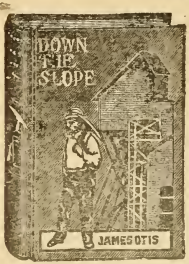

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